

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast  
City Council**

10<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## **MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on **Tuesday, 14th April, 2026 at 5.15 pm**, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1. Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

#### **2. Matters referred back from the Council/Motions**

- (a) Pilot Drug and Pill Testing Facilities at Major Events and Festivals (Pages 1 - 2)

#### **3. Committee/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Attendance at Committee by Irish Football Association - verbal update

#### **4. Operational Issues**

- (a) Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs (Pages 3 - 6)
- (b) Additional Dual Language Street Signs - applications for streets that did not meet the 15% support threshold (Pages 7 - 10)

- (c) Request for the use of Dundonald Cemetery - Somme Commemoration Ceremony (Pages 11 - 12)
  - (d) DfC Consultation - Amendments to Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (NI) 2014 (Pages 13 - 22)
  - (e) DAERA Consultation - 'Rethinking our Resources' - Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Management (Pages 23 - 74)
  - (f) GLL - Community Engagement and Underrepresented Target Groups - update (Pages 75 - 80)
  - (g) GLL - Service Report for 2025 (Pages 81 - 142)
  - (h) Pride of Place Awards 2026 (Pages 143 - 150)
  - (i) Integrated Advice Partnership and Community Support Funding 2026/27 (Pages 151 - 160)
  - (j) Summer Schemes - Children with Additional Needs (Pages 161 - 166)
  - (k) Biodiversity Programme of Work - update (Pages 167 - 186)
5. **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**
- (a) Stoma-friendly Toilets (Councillor Abernethy to raise)
  - (b) Pollution Incidents at Cregagh Glen - (Councillor Smyth to raise)



<b>Subject:</b>	Notice of Motion: Pilot Drug and Pill Testing Facilities at Major Events and Festivals
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, 14th April, 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Barry Flynn, Committee Services Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	As above.

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider a motion which was referred to the People and Communities Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to consider the motion and to take such action thereon as may be determined.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>At the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee on 24th March, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Smyth, was referred to the Committee for consideration:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Pilot Drug and Pill Testing Facilities at Major Events and Festivals</u></b></p> <p>“That this Council supports harm reduction approaches to drug use, particularly in the context of festivals and nightlife events.</p> <p>That this Council acknowledges the rising public concerns around drug-related harm, and notes that traditional approaches focused solely on enforcement have not eliminated the presence or use of illicit substances a major events. Therefore, I move that this Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the introduction of a pilot drug and pill testing facilities at major events and festivals held in Belfast;</li> <li>• Calls on relevant public bodies, including Public Health Agency and Belfast Trust, to explore the feasibility of piloting such a service, alongside those in the community and voluntary sector with a proven track record of harm reduction; and</li> </ul>

3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests an internal report on the role of Belfast City Council in supporting and facilitating such harm reduction services, including legal and regulatory considerations.”</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None at this stage.</p>
3.3	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Proposals for dual language street signs</b>
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager, ext. 2430 Heather Wylie, Property and Legal Coordinator, ext. 2464

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
------------	---

1.1	To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for seven existing streets within the city.																																
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>																																
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Trench Avenue, Moor Park Avenue, Moor Park Mews, Stewartstown Avenue, Ardmore Avenue, Osborne Drive and Harleston Street.																																
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>																																
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> The Council may erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English pursuant to Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.																																
3.2	Members are asked to consider the following applications to erect dual language street nameplates showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.																																
3.3	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>English Name</th> <th>Non- English Name</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Persons surveyed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Trench Avenue</td> <td>Ascaill Trench</td> <td>Off Trench Park, BT11</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moor Park Avenue</td> <td>Ascaill Pháirc an Mhóinteáin</td> <td>Off Brooke Park, BT10</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moor Park Mews</td> <td>Eachlann Pháirc an Mhóinteáin</td> <td>Off Brooke Park, BT10</td> <td>74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stewartstown Avenue</td> <td>Ascaill Bhaile Stíobhaird</td> <td>Off Stewartstown Park, BT11</td> <td>224</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ardmore Avenue</td> <td>Ascaill an Aird Mhóir</td> <td>Off Finaghy Road North, BT10</td> <td>116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Osborne Drive</td> <td>Céide Osborne</td> <td>Off Lisburn Road, BT9</td> <td>150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Harleston Street</td> <td>Sráid Harleston</td> <td>Off Lockview Road, BT9</td> <td>31</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed	Trench Avenue	Ascaill Trench	Off Trench Park, BT11	60	Moor Park Avenue	Ascaill Pháirc an Mhóinteáin	Off Brooke Park, BT10	53	Moor Park Mews	Eachlann Pháirc an Mhóinteáin	Off Brooke Park, BT10	74	Stewartstown Avenue	Ascaill Bhaile Stíobhaird	Off Stewartstown Park, BT11	224	Ardmore Avenue	Ascaill an Aird Mhóir	Off Finaghy Road North, BT10	116	Osborne Drive	Céide Osborne	Off Lisburn Road, BT9	150	Harleston Street	Sráid Harleston	Off Lockview Road, BT9	31
English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed																														
Trench Avenue	Ascaill Trench	Off Trench Park, BT11	60																														
Moor Park Avenue	Ascaill Pháirc an Mhóinteáin	Off Brooke Park, BT10	53																														
Moor Park Mews	Eachlann Pháirc an Mhóinteáin	Off Brooke Park, BT10	74																														
Stewartstown Avenue	Ascaill Bhaile Stíobhaird	Off Stewartstown Park, BT11	224																														
Ardmore Avenue	Ascaill an Aird Mhóir	Off Finaghy Road North, BT10	116																														
Osborne Drive	Céide Osborne	Off Lisburn Road, BT9	150																														
Harleston Street	Sráid Harleston	Off Lockview Road, BT9	31																														
3.4	The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.																																
3.5	In accordance with the Council's policy for the erection of dual language street signs, surveys of all persons appearing on the electoral register plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises for the above streets were carried out and the following responses were received.																																
3.6	<p>Trench Avenue, BT11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 occupiers (30%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 2 occupiers (3.33%) had no preference either way.</li> </ul>																																

3.7	<p>Moor Park Avenue, BT10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 occupiers (54.72%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> </ul>
3.8	<p>Moor Park Mews, BT10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 occupiers (36.49%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 1 occupier (1.35%) had no preference either way.</li> </ul>
3.9	<p>Stewartstown Avenue, BT11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84 occupiers (37.5%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 1 occupier (0.45%) was not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 4 occupiers (1.79%) had no preference either way.</li> </ul>
3.10	<p>Ardmore Avenue, BT7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 47 occupiers (40.52%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 2 occupiers (1.72%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 2 occupiers (1.72%) had no preference either way.</li> </ul>
3.11	<p>Osborne Drive, BT9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49 occupiers (32.67%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 26 occupiers (17.33%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 5 occupiers (3.33%) had no preference either way.</li> </ul>
3.12	<p>Harleston Street, BT9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 occupiers (22.58%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>• 1 occupier (3.23%) had no preference either way.</li> </ul>
3.13	<p><b><u>Assessment against policy</u></b></p> <p>The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate requires that at least fifteen percent (15%) of the occupiers surveyed must be in favour of the proposal to erect a second street sign in a language other than English, to progress to Committee for consideration.</p> <p>All the surveys listed above demonstrate compliance with the threshold contained within the Policy.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.14	<p>There is a cost of approximately £3330 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of the dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.</p>

<p>3.15</p> <p>3.16</p>	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment and an elected member notification process to identify any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs.</p> <p>The initial assessments and elected member notification carried out for the applications being considered did not identify any potential adverse impacts to prevent the surveys being carried out.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>None</p>



**PROCESS FOR ADDITIONAL DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS FOR STREETS THAT DID NOT MEET THE FIFTEEN PERCENT SUPPORT THRESHOLD IN A PREVIOUS SURVEY.**

<b>Subject:</b>	Process for additional Dual Language Street Sign applications for streets that did not meet the 15% support threshold in a previous application.
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager ext 2430 Alan Mayrs, Principal Building Control Surveyor ext. 2428

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b> <b>After Council Decision</b> <b>Sometime in the future</b> <b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>																																																																								
1.1	To consider the process to deal with additional Dual Language Street Sign applications for streets that did not meet the 15% support threshold under a previous application.																																																																								
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>																																																																								
2.1	Members are asked to consider the proposed process for dual language street sign applications for streets that did not achieve the fifteen percent threshold at street survey (including those that have failed in the past) and to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree that all applications for the same language in the streets are closed and that a new application for the same second language can only be accepted after two years from the date the first application was closed; and</li> <li>2. Agree that any applications submitted for a street requesting a different language remain open and are processed in line with policy.</li> </ul>																																																																								
	<b>Main Report</b>																																																																								
3.1	Applications received under the current Dual Language Street Signs Policy are processed in the order they are received and in line with the policy.																																																																								
3.2	In accordance with the policy, if the minimum threshold of fifteen percent in favour of a proposal is not met at street survey, applicants are given two weeks to advise the Council of any special circumstances in relation to the application. If there are no special circumstances, the application is closed, and signs are not erected. These streets are listed on the <a href="#">Council webpage</a> including the month this decision was reached.																																																																								
3.3	Since the implementation of the new policy there are thirty-three streets that have been closed in these circumstances. These streets are listed below along with the language requested. <p><b><u>Streets Not Meeting Threshold at Street Survey (Processed Application Closed)</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Street</th> <th>Language</th> <th>Street</th> <th>Language</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Belmont Avenue</td><td>Irish</td><td>Loopland Drive</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Belvedere Park</td><td>Irish</td><td>Magdala Street</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Burmah Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>Marsden Terrace</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Cherryvalley Gardens</td><td>Irish</td><td>McAuley Street</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Clovelly Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>Melrose Street</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Colinvale</td><td>Irish</td><td>Mill Pond Glen</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Cooke Mews</td><td>Irish</td><td>Mount Merrion Avenue</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Eliza Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>Queens Road</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Fortwilliam Grange</td><td>Irish</td><td>Ravenhill Reach</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Friendly Way</td><td>Irish</td><td>Shaftesbury Avenue</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Hawthornden Road</td><td>Irish</td><td>Skegoneill Avenue</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Isoline Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>Stewart Street</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Kent Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>Sunningdale Gardens</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>King Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>University Street</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Knightsbridge Park</td><td>Irish</td><td>Victoria Road</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Leganoe Street</td><td>Irish</td><td>Wellesley Avenue</td><td>Irish</td></tr> <tr><td>Lismain Street</td><td>Irish</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Street	Language	Street	Language	Belmont Avenue	Irish	Loopland Drive	Irish	Belvedere Park	Irish	Magdala Street	Irish	Burmah Street	Irish	Marsden Terrace	Irish	Cherryvalley Gardens	Irish	McAuley Street	Irish	Clovelly Street	Irish	Melrose Street	Irish	Colinvale	Irish	Mill Pond Glen	Irish	Cooke Mews	Irish	Mount Merrion Avenue	Irish	Eliza Street	Irish	Queens Road	Irish	Fortwilliam Grange	Irish	Ravenhill Reach	Irish	Friendly Way	Irish	Shaftesbury Avenue	Irish	Hawthornden Road	Irish	Skegoneill Avenue	Irish	Isoline Street	Irish	Stewart Street	Irish	Kent Street	Irish	Sunningdale Gardens	Irish	King Street	Irish	University Street	Irish	Knightsbridge Park	Irish	Victoria Road	Irish	Leganoe Street	Irish	Wellesley Avenue	Irish	Lismain Street	Irish		
Street	Language	Street	Language																																																																						
Belmont Avenue	Irish	Loopland Drive	Irish																																																																						
Belvedere Park	Irish	Magdala Street	Irish																																																																						
Burmah Street	Irish	Marsden Terrace	Irish																																																																						
Cherryvalley Gardens	Irish	McAuley Street	Irish																																																																						
Clovelly Street	Irish	Melrose Street	Irish																																																																						
Colinvale	Irish	Mill Pond Glen	Irish																																																																						
Cooke Mews	Irish	Mount Merrion Avenue	Irish																																																																						
Eliza Street	Irish	Queens Road	Irish																																																																						
Fortwilliam Grange	Irish	Ravenhill Reach	Irish																																																																						
Friendly Way	Irish	Shaftesbury Avenue	Irish																																																																						
Hawthornden Road	Irish	Skegoneill Avenue	Irish																																																																						
Isoline Street	Irish	Stewart Street	Irish																																																																						
Kent Street	Irish	Sunningdale Gardens	Irish																																																																						
King Street	Irish	University Street	Irish																																																																						
Knightsbridge Park	Irish	Victoria Road	Irish																																																																						
Leganoe Street	Irish	Wellesley Avenue	Irish																																																																						
Lismain Street	Irish																																																																								
3.4	Since the new policy was implemented, there have been 2428 applications received and as of March 26 there are 1523 pending applications for 922 streets to be processed in the order they were received.																																																																								

3.5 Thirteen of the streets listed above have subsequent applications for dual language street signage in either the same language or a different language. The table below indicates which of the above streets have subsequent live applications, which languages have been requested and the order in which the applications were received.

**Streets Not Meeting Threshold with Live Applications**

Street	No of Pending Applications	Languages Requested in Order of Receipt	Date Original Application Closed
Burmah Street	1	Irish	December 25
Cherryvalley Gardens	1	Irish	May 25
Colinvale	2	Irish, Irish	January 26
Isoline Street	3	Irish, Ulster Scots, Ulster Scots	March 26
Lismain Street	2	Irish, Ulster Scots	November 25
Magdala Street	1	Irish	May 25
Melrose Street	1	Irish	October 24
Mill Pond Glen	1	Irish	May 25
Queens Road	1	Irish	Jan 25
Sunningdale Gardens	1	Ulster Scots	December 25
University Street	1	Irish	March 25
Victoria Road	3	Ulster Scots, Ulster Scots, Ulster Scots	November 25
Welleseley Avenue	2	Irish, Irish	February 26

3.6 The policy does not stipulate how such applications should be dealt with, however as the 13 streets have failed to meet the threshold for Irish signs under a previous application the Committee is asked to agree to the closure of all subsequent applications for the same language already submitted.

3.7 The Committee is further asked to consider a time limit for the acceptance of further applications for the same language where a street has previously not met the threshold at street survey, and the current applications have been closed as outlined above.

3.8 In similar circumstances, the street re-naming policy states as follows, “*another request or re-application to change a street name which has been refused will not be accepted until a minimum period of 2 years has elapsed from the previous application date for change of the street name*”.

3.9 Committee should note any bar on new applications would be more appropriately linked to the original application closure date given the current processing times. It is therefore proposed that the time limit for re-application be set to 2 years from the date the first application was closed. Members should note that any new application would join the end of the queue.

3.10 Committee is also asked to agree to the applications already received for these streets in a different second language be dealt with as per the policy.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

3.11 None

3.12	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
4.1	None



Subject:	Request for the Use of Dundonald Cemetery for Somme Commemoration Parade
Date:	14 April 2026
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Darren Armstrong, Acting Bereavement Services Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received a request to use Dundonald Cemetery for a wreath laying ceremony to commemorate the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. Dundonald Apprentice Boys of Derry have requested an event on Thursday 25th June 2026.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the use of Dundonald Cemetery to facilitate the event subject to the event organisers adhering to operational requirements of the Council.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Dundonald Apprentice Boys of Derry has requested the use of Dundonald Cemetery to conduct a wreath laying ceremony on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026. The parade will start at 19:15hrs – finishing at 20:15hrs. The event is planned to take place outside normal operating hours. Similar to previous years the Apprentice Boys will be accompanied by Symington Memorial silver Band and conduct a short 15-minute service in the grave yard. The Apprentice Boys have requested that the cemetery remain open until 8.15 pm to allow them to leave the site.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>As this event at Dundonald Cemetery will take place outside normal operating hours, there will be a requirement for one member of staff to be on duty during these times and secure the cemetery after the event. The cost of this resource will be covered within normal operating budgets.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no known implications.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Department for Communities “Consultation on amendments to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014”</b> Response to the Consultation
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Director City Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire O’Neill Principal Environmental Health Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b> <b>After Council Decision</b> <b>Sometime in the future</b> <b>Never</b>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The Department for Communities issued a consultation questionnaire on 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2026 to seek views on the content on the proposals to amend the <b>Landlord</b> Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.
1.2	The Department's consultation document, proposed regulations and equality assessment may be accessed via the following weblink paper: <a href="#">Consultation on Amendments to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014   Department for Communities</a>
1.3	The Committee is advised that responses to the Department for Communities on the proposals to amend the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 are to be received by the 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2026, however an extension was granted to the Council until 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contents of the report which provides an overview of proposals to amend the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.</li> <li>• Agree that the proposed consultation response, provided at Appendix 1 to this report, be submitted to the Department for Communities by the consultation deadline by 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Landlord Registration Scheme was introduced on the 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2014. This created a single database of private landlords in Northern Ireland, allowing relevant and up to date information to be held about the landlords and their properties. The Department for Communities (DfC) was responsible for the management of the current database until April 2025 when it was transferred to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) to act as the lead Council responsible for administering the landlord data base on behalf of all councils. <a href="https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s119848/Transfer%20of%20Landlord%20Registration%20Scheme%20to%20Local%20Councils%20-%20V1.pdf">https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s119848/Transfer%20of%20Landlord%20Registration%20Scheme%20to%20Local%20Councils%20-%20V1.pdf</a>
3.2	The Department for Communities ("the Department") is consulting on changes to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 ("the Regulations") to appoint Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council as Landlord Registrar (acting as host council on behalf of all councils in Northern Ireland).
3.3	Other proposed changes include requesting mandatory information on the standards of properties, allowing data from the register to be shared with public authorities for safety purposes and research and statistics to help inform policy. There are also a few minor technical amendments proposed to reflect the fact that the administration of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) is now operated by local councils. The Department anticipates that these changes will make the Scheme a more effective tool for improving landlords' knowledge of, and compliance with, their legal duties.
3.4	The response to the questionnaire is contained in Appendix 1, however the draft response is summarised as follows:  <b>Regulation 2</b> will be amended to formally appoint Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council as the landlord registrar.

**Council Response**

3.5

***The Council welcomes this appointment.***

**Regulation 7** will be amended to reflect the policy intent that the landlord of a property defined as a licensed house in multiple occupation (“HMO”), be exempt from paying landlord registration fees. This exemption is because the Scheme is about the registration of landlords, not properties. Those individuals who hold a licence for an HMO would have already paid a fee to the HMO scheme

**Council Response**

3.6

***This point is not covered in the consultation questionnaire, but the Council agrees with this policy decision.***

**Regulation 9** Regulation 9 will be amended to allow the registrar to share information with the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) to assist with enforcement of gas safety legislation in private tenancies. It is also proposed that Regulation 9 should be amended to allow data contained in the register to be shared with the Department for Communities for statistical and research purposes to assist with the formulation and development of policy and legislation related to the private rented sector.

**Council Response**

3.7

***The Council welcomes this amendment as it works closely with HSENI in relation to enforcement of gas safety standards in the privately rented sector.***

**Schedule 1** The Department is proposing to request extra information from landlords about their properties at the point of registration. Landlords will be asked to confirm whether they are compliant with existing legislation relating to the safety and standards of their properties. These safety and standards requirements will be compliant with:

- the fitness for human habitation standards
- Energy Performance Certificate requirements (providing a valid EPC to a tenant or prospective tenant is a requirement under The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008).
- Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024
- Electrical Safety Standards for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.

**Council Response**

***The Council is unsure what benefit this information will have in relation to improving standards in the privately rented sector. The Council is disappointed that a simple declaration of compliance to ensure that a rented property meets the regulatory standards without ensuring compliance through an inspection does not go far enough.***

***In the absence of more robust regime which would provide for an inspection framework with appropriate additional resources, this declaration alone is unlikely to improve standards in the privately rented sector. Whilst some certification can be requested by the Council to verify the validity of a declaration, some aspects of compliance such as assessing the fitness standards and the presence of alarms cannot be verified without***

3.8	<p><b><i>inspecting the property. Any requirement for inspections to support compliance will need to be resourced as such additional regulatory work could not be undertaken within our existing resources.</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Schedule 2:</u></b></p> <p>The Department is proposing an amendment to reflect the established practice of allowing the public to carry out online searches to confirm if a particular property is on the landlord registration database.</p> <p><b><i>The Council welcomes the additional functionality to allow online searches by the public, as this is an important tool in detecting unregistered landlords and assisting tenants in selecting a tenancy with a compliant landlord.</i></b></p> <p>In response to any further comments:</p> <p><b><i>This proposed amendments and declaration will not improve fitness standards in the privately rented sector. The current statutory fitness standard is 45 years old and in our view is no longer fit for purpose. BCC has been advocating on many housing related consultations responses to DFC for a review of the fitness standard for many years, Council would ask the Department to prioritise the review of this standard to introduce a new standard commensurate with modern living standards which will drive improvements in the private rented sector housing stock.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Council is disappointed that the amendments are not directly linked to a more rigorous regime through an appropriately resourced inspection framework to ensure compliance with the current standards as the landlord’s simple declaration that the property meets the regulatory requirements does not go far enough.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Currently, the Council does not have the resources to undertake any additional work to ensure compliance with the landlord registration scheme.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Department should also be prioritising the resourcing of the regulation of the private rented sector as Councils are being asked to enforce a range of new regulations without additional resources which have been incrementally introduced under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.</i></b></p>
4.0	
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Currently, the Council does not have the resources to undertake any additional work to ensure compliance with the landlord registration scheme.</p> <p>The Department should prioritise the resourcing of the regulation of the private rented sector as Councils are being asked to enforce a range of new regulations without additional resources which have been incrementally introduced under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.</p>
5.0	
5.1	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.</p>

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached or None</b>
	<p>Appendix 1- Consultation Questionnaire with responses:</p> <p>Appendix 2- Consultation paper: <a href="https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/dfc-amendments-to-landlord-registration-scheme-regs-ni-2014-consultation.pdf">https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/dfc-amendments-to-landlord-registration-scheme-regs-ni-2014-consultation.pdf</a></p> <p>Appendix 3- Draft amended regulations:</p> <p><a href="https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/dfc-landlord-registration-scheme-regulations-ni-2026.pdf">https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/dfc-landlord-registration-scheme-regulations-ni-2026.pdf</a></p>

This page is intentionally left blank

## Consultation Questions on amendments to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and proposed answers

### Information required at registration

#### Question 1

Do you agree with the proposal to expand the information requested for landlord registration as outlined in the consultation document?

Unsure

Please explain your answer below

***The Council is unsure what benefit this information will have in relation to improving standards in the privately rented sector.***

#### Question 2

Do you agree with the proposal that information on the following requirements should be provided as part of the registration process?

Fitness for human habitation	<b>Unsure</b>
Smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms	<b>Unsure</b>
Electrical safety checks	<b>Unsure</b>
Gas safety certificates	<b>Unsure</b>
Energy performance certificates	<b>Unsure</b>

Please explain your answer below

***As stated above, the Council is unsure what benefit this information will have in relation to improving standards in the privately rented sector. The Council is disappointed that a simple declaration of compliance to ensure that a rented property meets the regulatory standards without ensuring compliance through an inspection does not go far enough.***

***In the absence of more robust regime which would provide for an inspection framework with appropriate additional resources, this declaration alone is unlikely to improve standards in the privately rented sector. Whilst some certification can be requested by the Council to verify the validity of a declaration, some aspects of compliance such as assessing the fitness standards and the presence of alarms cannot be verified without inspecting the property. Any requirement for inspections to support compliance will need to be resourced as such additional regulatory work could not be undertaken within our existing resources.***

## **Regulation 9 – changes to data sharing**

### **Question 3**

Do you agree with the proposal to share information held on the Landlord Register with the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland to assist with gas safety enforcement in private rented properties?

**Yes**

Please explain your answer below

***The Council has worked closely with HSENI in relation to gas safety enforcement for a number of years and welcomes this proposal to assist with enforcement activities.***

### **Question 4**

Do you agree with the proposal to share information (this will not include personal information that would allow an individual to be identified) held on the Landlord Register with the Department for Communities for research and statistical purposes, to assist with the formulation and development of policy and legislation relating to the private rented sector?

**Yes**

Please explain your answer below

***The Council welcomes any proposals which assist in the development of policy and guidance in relation to the regulation of the private rented sector.***

## **Schedule 2**

### **Question 5**

Do you agree with the proposal to amend Schedule 2 to bring this in line with the current practice of allowing a public online search by address function on the Landlord Registration Scheme website?

**Yes**

Please explain your answer below

***The Council welcomes the additional functionality to allow online searches by the public, as this is an important tool in detecting unregistered landlords and assisting tenants in selecting a tenancy with a compliant landlord.***

## General

### Question 6

Do you have any other comments on the proposed changes to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations?

Comments

***This proposed amendments and declaration will not improve fitness standards in the privately rented sector. The current statutory fitness standard is 45 years old and in our view is no longer fit for purpose. BCC has been advocating on many housing related consultations responses to DFC for a review of the fitness standard for many years, Council would ask the Department to prioritise the review of this standard to introduce a new standard commensurate with modern living standards which will drive improvements in the private rented sector housing stock.***

***The Council is disappointed that the amendments are not directly linked to a more rigorous regime through an appropriately resourced inspection framework to ensure compliance with the current standards as the landlord's simple declaration that the property meets the regulatory requirements does not go far enough.***

***The Council does not have the resources to undertake any additional work to ensure compliance with the landlord registration scheme.***

***The Department should also be prioritising the resourcing of the regulation of the private rented sector as Councils are being asked to enforce a range of new regulations without additional resources which have been incrementally introduced under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.***

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	DAERA Consultation - Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy
Date:	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director OSSS & Resources and Fleet
Contact Officer:	Jennifer Stephens Waste Officer, Resources and Fleet

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	The purpose of this report is to present to Members the draft Belfast City Council response to the DAERA public consultation on 'Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy'
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are requested to review and agree the draft Belfast City Council response to the recently published DAERA public consultation on 'Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy'

3.0	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>Members will recall, from the Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026, that The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) recently published a consultation titled “Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy. At that meeting, members noted the contents of the consultation document,</p> <p>A link to the Consultation can be found here <a href="#">Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy   Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</a> This can also be found attached as Appendix I</p> <p>The draft strategy outlines 10 targets and over 60 actions to help Northern Ireland achieve its vision of “a resource efficient country where we rethink how we deal with resources and waste, reducing and diverting overall waste, extracting the maximum value from recycling materials to deliver a low-carbon circular economy, with recovery and landfill as methods of last resort.”</p> <p>Proposed actions include support programmes, statutory and best practice guidance, campaigns, data refinements, and cross-departmental collaboration. The strategy provides a long-term plan for significant environmental change, alongside short-term actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.</p> <p>The draft Strategy aims to integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability.</p> <p>The strategy provides a range of drivers and support, based on the recognition of the different levels of potential from all stakeholders in the value chain. The actions within the strategy are designed to help Northern Ireland achieve both the Circular Economy Package targets and the recycling target set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 that will require contributions from a wide range of sectors. The Circular Economy Package targets include a municipal waste recycling target of 65% and a 10% cap on the amount of municipal waste going to landfill by 2035.</p> <p>The Climate Change Act requires that at least 70% of waste must be recycled by 2030 in Northern Ireland. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically household waste.</p> <p>Therefore, the sectors in scope of the draft Strategy include household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste.</p> <p>The Consultation opened on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026, and the closing date has been extended to 06 May 2026. Responses are invited, from both individual members of the public and organisations, including Councils.</p> <p>The Service has compiled a draft a response to the consultation. This can be found attached as Appendix II and the key summary responses are outlined below.</p> <p>We note that the government response and outcome of the DAERA Rethinking Our Resources Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in Northern Ireland public consultation exercise is still awaited.</p>

In addition to the BCC response, arc21 has engaged with its member councils to inform and draft a coordinated responses by the group. At the time of writing this report, we have not received the final draft arc21 response.

### **Summary of key responses to the consultation**

#### **Part 1: The Need for change – Outlining the aims scope and vision, as well as targets and objectives.**

We support the overall direction of the draft strategy and its alignment with Circular Economy and Climate objectives. However, the strategy is high level and lacks clarity on delivery - particularly regarding infrastructure, enforcement, statutory powers and the application of the waste hierarchy including greater emphasis on prevention.

The council has concerns about the measurability and realisation off the targets and objectives, noting the need for clear definitions, baselines, interim, milestones and robust monitoring.

Greater clarity is also required on roles responsibilities and expectations for local authorities. The impacts of parallel policies on costs and material flows should be considered. Critically, delivery will depend on sustained funding, capital investment and practical guidance, without which the strategies ambitions may be difficult to achieve.

#### **Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action**

We broadly agree with the inclusion of the seven ways streams within the scope of the strategy and support most proposed actions in principle. However, there is a lack of clarity on the definition scope and measurement of the 70% recycling target including how performance will be monitored and verified across all relevant waste streams.

The council has significant concerns regarding deliverability particularly in relation to infrastructure, capacity, timing, statutory backing, enforcement powers and the level of funding and support that will be made available to local authorities.

It is also disappointing that are no clear targets for litter and fly tipping.

Further clarity is required and how domestic infrastructure will be funded and delivered in a timely manner to reduce reliance on export markets. Local authorities already face increasing cost pressures and lack of adequate infrastructure risks exasperating these costs and undermine the achievement of targets.

#### **Part 3: Making it Happen**

We support the proposed actions relating to infrastructure, stakeholders, communication skills and enforcement. However there remains a clear need for greater clarity on roles, responsibilities, timescales and how delivery will be coordinated across stakeholders.

We highlight that Northern Ireland currently lacks sufficient domestic waste infrastructure and relies heavily on export. There are limited treatment facilities within Northern Ireland. Strong alignment between the strategy and local development plans is essential to enable appropriate planning for future infrastructure supported by clear policy and up-to-date guidance.

Whilst communications and engagement actions are welcomed, further detail is required on implementation, funding and the role of partners alongside clarity on performance

	<p>metrics and the support available to councils.</p> <p>Similarly, skills training research and enforcement actions are supported in principle but require clear delivery mechanisms, adequate resourcing and defined accountability.</p> <p><b>Part 4 Monitoring Progress</b></p> <p>We feel the proposed approach of a mid-term report and a final review over a six-year period is insufficient. We would encourage more frequent (annual) reporting. This would enable earlier identification of issues or under performance, support timely intervention, and corrective action and improve transparency and accountability.</p> <p><b>Part 5 Supporting Documentation</b></p> <p>We broadly agree that the strategy acknowledges the requirements of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order, but further clarity is needed on how these will be operationalized and monitored</p> <p>The proposed waste compositional surveys are welcomed although clarification is required and whether they will cover all relevant waste streams outlined within the strategy.</p> <p>The council agrees in principle with the conclusions of the Environment Report, Habitats Assessment, Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment. However, each assessment is limited by the high-level nature of the strategy and relies heavily on assumptions around its successful delivery, regulatory controls and mitigation.</p> <p>There is insufficient detail to fully assess impacts at this stage particularly in relation to infrastructure timing and potential differential impacts in section 75 groups and rural communities.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None with regards to responding to the consultation However Council would request that DEARA consider the financial impact on Councils of any changes that occur following the consultation and that they work with Councils to estimate the impact and provide financial support to them to deliver changes to how our Services are provided.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None with regards to responding to the consultation</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - <a href="#">Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy</a></p> <p>Appendix 2 - Belfast City Council's draft response to the Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy</p>



# Rethinking Our Resources:

## Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs

An Roinn

Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department of

Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

January 2026

## Contents

Purpose	3
Layout of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy	3
Making a Submission	4
Question Summary and Response Required	5
Data Protection	5
Introduction and Respondent Details	6
<b>Part 1: The Need for Change</b>	<b>8</b>
The Aim of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy	8
The Scope of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy	8
Vision	9
Our Targets	10
Objectives	11
<b>Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action</b>	<b>12</b>
Climate Change	13
Household waste	13
Non-household municipal waste	16
Commercial and industrial waste	18
Construction and demolition waste	19
Hazardous waste	21
Agricultural waste	23
Litter and fly-tipping	24
Overall	25
<b>Part 3: Making It Happen</b>	<b>26</b>
Infrastructure and capacity	26
Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals	28
Communication and engagement	29
Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future	31
Enforcement	32
<b>Part 4: Monitoring Progress</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Part 5: Supporting Documentation</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Part 6: How To Respond</b>	<b>37</b>
What we will do with your responses	37
<b>ANNEX 1 Publication of Responses</b>	<b>38</b>
Confidentiality	38
Data Protection	38
Freedom of Information	38

# Public Consultation: Rethinking Our Resources - Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy

## Purpose

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is seeking views on the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland.

This consultation process covers a range of issues relevant to the development of an updated Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy. This new strategy aims to maximise the potential for better use of the resources consumed in Northern Ireland, to prevent them becoming waste, or where generated, to ensure they are captured and processed into products that minimise environmental pollution. The strategy builds on previous plans by broadening the range of sectors obligated, presenting new actions to achieve higher targets, and setting out the greater ambition necessary to meet net zero. In proposing considerable improvements to the management of all Northern Ireland's waste, the strategy provides a wider range of drivers and support based on the recognition of the different levels of potential from all stakeholders in the value chain. The actions within the strategy are designed to help Northern Ireland achieve both the Circular Economy Package targets and the recycling target set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 that will require contributions from a wide range of sectors.

The Circular Economy Package targets include a municipal waste recycling target of 65% and a 10% cap on the amount of municipal waste going to landfill by 2035.

The Climate Change Act requires that at least 70% of waste must be recycled by 2030 in Northern Ireland.

## Layout of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy

The draft Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy is divided into four parts..

- 1. Part 1: The Need for Change** - Outlines the vision, targets, and objectives driving the strategy.
- 2. Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action** - Details actions for seven significant waste categories to drive the required change.
- 3. Part 3: Making it Happen** - Discusses the necessary conditions for effective resource management, including infrastructure, collaboration, communication, research, and enforcement.
- 4. Part 4: Monitoring Progress** - Explains how success will be measured and reported.

## Making a Submission

This consultation is organised around thematic areas. Respondents are requested to consider 27 questions, of which four are mandatory. Mandatory questions only relate to the respondent details. It is acknowledged that not all aspects of the strategy are relevant to all respondents.

**Part 1** - The Need for Change, sets the scene, outlining the overall vision, targets and objectives of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy. Questions in this section are optional.

**Part 2** - Enabling Change and Empowering Action, details actions across seven significant waste categories. Throughout this section respondents can choose which questions they wish to respond to and may choose to respond only to the questions or thematic areas relevant to them. Questions in this section are optional.

**Part 3** - Making it Happen, focusses on how we turn the Resources and Waste Management Strategy into reality and make it happen in Northern Ireland. Questions in this section are optional.

**Part 4** - Monitor and Evaluation, focusses on measuring progress through monitoring and evaluation. The question in this section is optional.

**Part 5** - Supporting Documentation, concentrates on the supporting documentation, specifically the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 Requirements (WCLO), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), Equality Screening Assessment (EQIA) and Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). Questions in this section are optional.

All submissions are welcome and will be considered in developing the new Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy.

Responses to this consultation are to be submitted online through Citizen Space. The consultation can be accessed following this link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>

## Question Summary and Response Required

Below is a summary of how the consultation is structured on Citizen Space.

There are a total of **27 questions** to be answered, with **four** of them mandatory.

Response Required	No of Questions	Mandatory	Optional
Introduction and respondent details	4 questions	✓	
<b>Part 1 - The Need for Change</b>			
Sets the scene and provides background to this strategy	3 questions		✓
<b>Part 2 - Enabling Change and Empowering Action</b>			
Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022	1 question		✓
Household waste	1 question		✓
Non-household municipal waste	1 question		✓
Commercial and industrial waste	1 question		✓
Construction and demolition waste	1 question		✓
Hazardous waste	1 question		✓
Agricultural waste	1 question		✓
Litter and fly-tipping	1 question		✓
Summary	1 question		✓
<b>Part 3 - Making it Happen</b>			
Infrastructure and capacity	1 question		✓
Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals	1 question		✓
Communication and engagement	1 question		✓
Research, Innovation and Skills, for the Future	1 question		✓
Enforcement	1 question		✓
<b>Part 4 - Monitoring Progress</b>			
Monitoring and Evaluation	1 question		✓
<b>Part 5 - Supporting Documentation</b>			
Waste and Contaminated Land (WCLO)	1 question		✓
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	1 question		✓
Habitat Regulatory Assessment (HRA)	1 question		✓
Equality Screening Assessment (EQIA)	1 question		✓
Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)	1 question		✓

## Data Protection

DAERA is committed to engaging with stakeholders in a clear, open, and transparent manner. Any person or organisation can make a submission in relation to this consultation via Citizen Space. Guidance is provided on the 'Confidentiality' of responses under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in Annex 1 for your reference. Also, if you require any further information, please contact a member of the consultation team on [WastePolicyTeam@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:WastePolicyTeam@daera-ni.gov.uk)

## Introduction and Respondent Details

Northern Ireland has enormous opportunities to put the resources flowing through its economy to better use, increasing their value to the economy, offering scope for social gain, such as job creation, and reducing their impact on the environment. While the beginnings of a circular economy have emerged in recent years, with much higher recycling rates, there is potential to go further in realising value from the materials arising as waste at the end of their life. The strategy sets out the government's vision for a more progressive approach to managing waste in Northern Ireland and this consultation document is designed to capture your thoughts on the strategy.

Everyone uses resources and creates waste, whether at home as a householder, in the workplace, or out and about. Equally, most organisations generate or handle waste to a greater or lesser extent.

The range of stakeholders generating and handling resources includes citizens, councils and diverse business types including retail, hospitality, education, healthcare, transport and manufacturing. All these sectors produce varying quantities and types of waste, reflective of their size and current business operating models. Each stakeholder faces different levels of challenge in making the transition, and so to be effective the strategy aims to deliver actions that resolve burdens, designing and tailoring new support to each sector so that improvements can be made and further opportunities identified.

This consultation is open to anyone, but we expect it to be of greatest interest to:

- Councils
- Waste management companies
- Reprocessors
- Trade bodies
- Business and industry
- The agricultural sector
- The construction and demolition sector
- Environmental organisations and
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)

Please complete questions 1 to 4, to allow us to capture the background and geographical location of respondents.

**Question 1: What is your name? Jennifer Stephens**

**Question 2: What is your email address? stephensj@belfastcity.gov.uk**

**Question 3: What local Council area do you live in?**

- Belfast City Council

**Question 4: Which category best represents you from the list below?**

- Local Government

DRAFT

## Part 1: The Need for Change

Part 1, The Need for Change, provides the background to the Resources and Waste Management Strategy, explaining how it relates to previous strategy documents, relevant legislation at national, UK and international level, and the drivers for change.

Over the last two decades in Northern Ireland, we have made significant improvements in how our waste is managed, but new legal commitments and targets mean we now have a unique opportunity to put Northern Ireland's resources to better use, increasing their value to the economy, offering job creation and reducing their impact on the environment. Waste management is not just about how we treat waste but how we are able to manage our valuable resources throughout their full lifecycle by influencing how we consume, how we prevent waste, how we capture it for recycling and how we treat it at the end of its useful life. This is a core aim of the strategy.

Improving how resources and waste are managed will require action from all sectors. We recognise that everyone living and working here uses resources and creates waste. Equally, most organisations generate or handle waste to a greater or lesser extent. Some, such as councils, waste management companies and recyclers, have a particular interest in this strategy. Given this broad audience, the strategy has been written to be accessible to all. This means that some of the more detailed and technical areas of waste management will be found within the appendices, rather than the main document. A glossary is also available in the appendices.

### The Aim of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy

There is ambition to drive more waste diversion from sectors traditionally in scope of waste management plus new, previously underrepresented, areas. Achieving this will require the adoption of innovative and effective interventions.

The aim of this strategy is to outline a comprehensive framework to guide these interventions over the next 6 years (the lifetime of this strategy). By taking a proactive and robust approach, the proposed targets and actions aim to ensure long term sustainability, maximizing their positive impact even beyond the initial span of the strategy.

This will involve the integration of modern technology, collaborative partnerships and policy reforms to deliver measurable outcomes. By focusing on both immediate and enduring solutions the strategy seeks to establish a transformative shift in resource efficiency and waste diversion practices ensuring resilience and adaptability to future demands.

### The Scope of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy

The proposed scope of this strategy is for controlled wastes generated by households, commercial and industrial premises and category 3 animal by products as defined in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) 1069/2009. Managing these specific, yet widely generated resources, will make key contributions to the Climate Change Act recycling target and Net Zero commitments.

Whilst there are clear improvements in how Northern Ireland has managed its waste over time, international strategies show that, because of diminishing returns associated with the earlier

drivers, improving both resource use and waste diversion will require even more innovation and a redesign of policy measures to drive the necessary change. This strategy provides the long-term plan to drive significant environmental change, but it also provides clear, effective and realistic shorter-term tactics and actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.

Over the next few pages, we ask for your thoughts regarding our proposed vision, targets and objectives for the waste management strategy.

## Vision

Our vision is for a resource efficient country where we rethink how we deal with resources and waste, reducing and diverting overall waste, extracting the maximum value from recycling materials to deliver a low-carbon circular economy, with recovery and landfill as methods of last resort.

**Question 5: Do you agree with the vision for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

- Agree in principle

Belfast City Council broadly agrees in principle that the strategy reflects the key principles of a circular economy including resource efficiency, waste reduction, maximizing value for materials and the use of recovery in landfill only as a last resort. The emphasis on and contributing to a low carbon economy is also welcomed and aligns with wider environmental and climate objectives.

However, while the vision sets a clear and positive direction of travel it is high level and would benefit from greater clarity on the practical enablers required to achieve it - in particular the vision focuses on outcomes, but it doesn't reference how these will be delivered.

Diverting waste from what to what? Vision would benefit from mention of application of the waste hierarchy. There is a lack of detail on infrastructure and enforcement powers.

Overall, the strategy lacks detail relating to what resources and support, both in terms of finances and guidance, will be made available to local authorities.

## Our Targets

Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035.

Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and will continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials.

DAERA will continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.

DAERA will continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.

DAERA will work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.

DAERA will continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime's involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

**Question 6: Do you agree with the targets for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

- Disagree

We note the first five references are targets and the second five are actions/aims and as such they are not measurable. How will DAERA approach measuring the level of any outcome or apply metrics to indicate that they have been achieved and to what level? We also query the target noted for 2025 of achieving 55% municipal waste recycling, when the timeframe has passed.

Additional power and supporting legislation for local authorities will be needed and a clear understanding of the expectations and the requirements on local authorities in terms of both household, commercial waste and recycling.

One area not outlined here is carbon, which could help promote the Climate theme, by not just focusing on recycling but also on prevention and reduction. Perhaps there should be a target for a carbon-based approach and an applicable metric to measure levels of achievement.

From the document it seems that the Collaborative Change Programme may be ending so where is the financial support to address capital investment and ensure delivery of targets?

We query the 70% target for recycling levels to be achieved by 2030 in the Climate Act and note that the definition of recycling needs clarity. The Strategy would benefit from setting out specific actions, statutory levers (where appropriate), interim milestones, defined responsibilities, and monitoring arrangements. Without this level of detail, it is difficult to assess whether the targets are achievable or how progress will be tracked.

How councils will be funded to meet any new requirements and/or targets needs to be identified, we need a timed and consistent approach. This is particularly true as the impact of other parallel policies such as the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) for waste, the rollout of Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), and rollout of Digital Waste Tracking (DWT) are to increase disposal costs and reduce collected material value for local authorities over the next few years. DRS could reduce the quality of recycling collected by local authorities and we question what materials local authorities will be left with? Will it be poor quality material and will it divert good materials from municipal waste streams? The Circular Economy will mean more REDUCE + REUSE rather than recycle.

Overall, we feel there is a lack of infrastructure and the appropriate enforcement powers/legislation to support and enable these objectives. We welcome a clearer understanding of how these targets will be measured and monitored, how they will be resourced and what support will be in place to implement these.

## Objectives

### 1. Increase waste diversion

- Reduce reliance on landfill and recovery, reduce loss of valuable resources, reduce littering and reduce instances of waste crime.

### 2. Enhance Resource Efficiency

- Increase the quantity and quality of recycling to improve the environment, grow a low-carbon circular economy and to meet our legal targets.

### 3. Improve Communications and Skills

- Invest in comprehensive communication campaigns and behaviour change to improve resource and waste management. Work with the relevant sectors to ensure the right skills are in place to enable a transition to a circular economy.

### 4. Strengthen Partnerships and Collaboration

- Work with businesses, industries, communities and the waste sector to develop shared responsibility for waste management and sustainable resource use.

**Question 7: Do you agree with the objectives for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

- Agree, in principle

Objective 1 - is welcome but greater emphasis could be placed on waste prevention and reduction at source, in line with the Waste Hierarchy, to ensure that the strategy prioritises “avoiding waste generation” in the first instance rather than managing it further downstream.

Objective 2 - could be strengthened by recognising the importance of developing end markets for recycled material and supporting wider circular economy activities such as “reuse” and “repair”

Objective 3 - would benefit from greater specificity in terms of HOW behavioural change will be achieved, measured and sustained across different sectors and communities.

Objective 4 – need clear definition of roles responsibilities and governance arrangements to ensure that partnership working translates into effective and coordinated action. We would also seek clarity on the role local authorities have to play in this.

Council would like to understand the detail behind the aspiration and recommends that the mandatory guidance on Collections Consistency/Simpler Recycling is required sooner rather than later. Also, the timing needs to be appropriate and achievable. SMART objectives from an operational perspective are needed to reflect what is operationally viable, allowing for effective monitoring and accountability.

Across all the objectives there are some notable gaps in particular no explicit reference to enforcement and compliance which are essential to ensuring adherence to the waste hierarchy and in tackling illegal waste activity.

The EFW infrastructure, which is the model in use currently and the roll-out of DRS could actually reduce quality of recycling, meaning that the recycling tonnage captured by local authorities could decrease leading to less efficient schemes. Without sufficient, sustained and timely funding, local authorities will be unable to increase performance to meet the targets set out in the draft strategy.

We feel these objectives are ambitious and want to understand the mechanisms and resourcing available to enable successful outcomes.

## Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action

Part 2, Enabling Change and Empowering Action, addresses the seven categories of waste that either form a significant part of Northern Ireland's waste stream, such as household waste, or that warrant specific consideration because of their impacts, for example hazardous waste.

The proposed scope of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy is for controlled wastes generated by households, commercial and industrial premises and category 3 animal by products, as defined in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) 1069/2009.

This part of the strategy sets out seven categories of waste:

1. Household waste
2. Non-household municipal waste
3. Commercial and industrial waste
4. Construction and demolition waste
5. Hazardous waste
6. Agricultural waste
7. Litter and fly-tipping

Specific sections in the strategy, for each of the seven categories of waste, summarise the:

- sector background,
- key challenges for managing this waste,
- proposed targets, and
- proposed actions necessary to drive the required change.

## Climate Change

Section 18 of the [Climate Change Act \(NI\) 2022](#) states that the Department must ensure that at least 70% of waste is recycled by 2030, and it must also develop and publish sectoral plans for the waste management sector setting out how the sector will contribute to the achievement of the targets in the Act. Using this consultation, DAERA aim to define the scope of the 70% recycling target and identify the contributions.

**Question 8: Do you agree that the sectors in scope of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, which are controlled wastes consisting of household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste, should be the sectors in scope of achieving the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 70% recycling rate target for Northern Ireland?**

- Agree in principle

We agree in principle.

We note that there is no specific target for litter included in the 70% figure. The waste data flow system can collect this information; so, we query why it is not reflected here, in fact there are several areas/sectors not included that should be contributing to the 70% recycling target.

Greater clarity is needed to specify whether the 70% figure relates to total waste arising, municipal waste only, or particular waste streams, and how performance will be measured, reported, and verified. It is not evident what new interventions will be introduced, what will materially change, or what will be done differently to drive improved performance.

## Household waste

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonization of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically household waste.

Amendments made in 2020 to the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (WCLO) introduced new municipal recycling targets – for households and businesses who produce waste similar to that from households.

The targets and actions relevant to each are set out below.

### Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030;

2. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025;
3. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030;
4. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035; and
5. Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

DRAFT

### Actions

DAERA commits to the following actions:

#### *Increase our recycling rates and improve material quality*

- 1) Define what is to be included in the waste recycling 70% target and identify the contributions required from the household, business, commercial and industrial sectors by the end of December 2026.
- 2) Introduce an EPR scheme for household packaging by end of December 2025.
- 3) Flexible plastic packaging to be collected for recycling from households by 31 March 2027.
- 4) Develop reform of the Producer Responsibility Schemes for WEEE and Batteries by 2027, and End of Life Vehicles in line with Windsor Framework requirements and UK ambition.
- 5) Introduce DRS for single use drinks containers in Northern Ireland by the end of December 2027.
- 6) By 31 March 2027, conduct an up-to-date waste compositional analysis to determine the composition of household waste in Northern Ireland.
- 7) Develop guidance to ensure all councils in Northern Ireland collect a core set of materials that includes glass bottles, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, cartons and metal packaging. Plastic film will be introduced to the core set by the end of March 2027. The core set will be reviewed regularly.
- 8) Develop guidance to set out minimum service standards for local councils on delivering household recycling collections, in collaboration with all councils and wider stakeholders by the end of March 2027.
- 9) Develop plans to ensure that all councils provide food waste collection services to all households in Northern Ireland and enhance their existing food waste collections to increase capture of food waste.
- 10) Administer the Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme (HWRCCP) as a funding mechanism for Councils to transform kerbside recycling and Household Recycling Centre infrastructure and services to realise the economic potential of recycling to the economy. Final applications by 31st March 2026.

#### *Reduce waste going to landfill*

- 11) Implement measures to divert more biodegradable waste from landfill by the end of December 2027.
- 12) Develop guidance for all councils in Northern Ireland to assist in reducing residual waste collected from households, reflecting the move towards the collection of more recyclables, reuse and waste prevention by the end of March 2027. Household circumstances will be considered and exemptions provided where appropriate.

**Promote waste prevention and reuse**

- 13) Implement and review the activities in the Waste Prevention Programme by the end of December 2026.
- 14) Review the feasibility of setting waste prevention targets for Northern Ireland.

**Promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources**

- 15) Continue to promote the MyRecyclingNI website and encourage councils to improve their end destination data reporting to ensure households understand where their recyclable materials are being processed.

**Question 9: Do you support the following actions set out for household waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Increase our recycling rates and improve material quality</b>				
Actions 1 to 10 proposed to increase recycling rates and improve recycling quality of household waste	Yes, support			
<b>Reduce waste going to landfill</b>				
Actions 11 to 12 proposed to reduce the amount of waste arisings from households going to landfill	Yes, support			
<b>Promote waste prevention and reuse</b>				
Actions 13 to 14 proposed to promote household waste prevention and reuse in Northern Ireland (These actions are in conjunction with those in the Waste Prevention Programme)	Yes, support			
<b>Promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources</b>				
Action 15 proposed to promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources generated from household waste	Yes, support			

We have some reservations on the timings and support in terms of legislation to take forward these actions. One area which needs more clarity is the "Consistency in Collections" document - is the nature of this document mandatory or advisory? What is the timetable for delivery?

Take the case of Wales, second in the world in recycling. They are working with a solid policy and legal framework supported by significant financial resources. We suggest DAERA adopt a similar approach. In addition, we suggest individual targets per authority, factoring in the circumstances encountered by each local authority, e.g. social deprivation, urban/rural housing stock. We believe a modelling exercise is needed and that the strategy objectives align to the Circular Economy, (still being considered by government.)

Timing is a major concern, e.g. the level of infrastructure required to accept flexible plastics from April 2027, may not be developed locally in time and may require export. The conditions and environment need to be created to attract local investment. We recommend that DEARA develop these actions collaboratively with councils and that appropriate funding made available for this.

In Action 4, clarification is needed on the obligations for council to collect. Or will disposal be conducted via contracted services? In terms of finances, future costs from the inclusion of waste into the ETS and the loss of valuable recyclables (aluminum) through DRS, need to be factored when collaborating with councils on actions. There is a potential requirement to consider locked bins to counteract scavenging for item falling under DRS as indicated in Wales.

The proposed guidance is welcomed, however clarity on whether it is statutory, or mandatory is needed. To deliver the targets it is likely that a mandatory approach would drive the desired change. This was the case when the Food Waste Regulations were introduced in 2015 and the mandatory requirement for Councils to provide the service by April 2017 resulted in all Councils moving together and a significant uplift in organic tonnages and NI recycling rate.

Overall, there is an ask for endorsement of these actions. We seek clarity and details on type of support, the stages involved, timing and funding - especially when considering actions 8, 9, & 11. There needs to be a statutory requirement to implement and achieve this model. Collaboration with councils is needed.

Action 10 and 2 are completed therefore, we note that there are 8 actions within this area.

In terms of Actions 12 to 15, what measures are proposed for enforcement, comms and achieving compliance? Prevention is referenced in section 47 of the 1990 act, however it's not applicable to Northern Ireland therefore we do not have the enforcement powers, to support some of the actions proposed.

Government position on export in the absence of local infrastructure needs to be clear. In addition it needs to be specified what reduction in recovery is required as this does not appear to have been quantified.

Measures need to be defined and should also cover commercial and industrial waste.

## Non-household municipal waste

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically non-household waste.

Amendments made in 2020 to the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (WCLO) introduced new municipal recycling targets - for households and businesses who produce waste similar to that from households.

The targets and actions for each are set out below.

### Targets

The targets for each are set out below.

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030;
2. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025;
3. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030;
4. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035; and
5. Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

### Actions

To increase NHM recycling rates, DAERA commits to the following:

#### *Communications and behaviour change*

- 16) By the end of March 2027, to deliver a targeted national campaign to raise awareness in advance of the introduction of any new workplace recycling practices.

#### *Guidance and support to businesses and workplaces*

- 17) Work with councils and service providers to develop a minimum service standard for non-household waste and recycling services by the end of March 2027.
- 18) Develop guidance, tools and resources to support workplaces to implement effective recycling practices by the end of December 2027.
- 19) Work with Invest NI, trade bodies, councils and other stakeholders to ensure businesses are aware of the requirements and the support available to them.

#### *Regulation and policy development*

- 20) Undertake a review of the Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 with a view to extending the scope to all businesses by the end of December 2022.

- 21) Develop regulations requiring businesses and other non-household organisations to present a consistent core list of materials for recycling. The core list of materials will mirror the core list of materials collected by household waste and recycling services to achieve consistency across sectors by the end of December 2028.
- 22) Progress actions to reduce or eliminate the disposal of NHM biodegradable waste to landfill by the end of December 2027.
- 23) Review, with councils, the potential for household recycling centres (HRCs) to be adapted to accept, measure and monitor non-household waste and recycling by the end of December 2029.

**Data, performance targets and reporting**

- 24) Through waste composition analysis, establish overall and sectoral baseline non-household waste compositions and arisings by the end of June 2027.
- 25) Establish a reporting framework to capture non-household waste and recycling performance data, including end destinations for materials by the end of March 2027.

**Question 10: Do you support the following actions set out for non-household municipal waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Communications and behaviour change</b>				
Action 16 in relation to communications and behaviour change relating to non-household municipal waste	Yes, support			
<b>Guidance and support to businesses and workplaces</b>				
Actions 17 to 19 in relation to the provision of guidance and support to business and workplaces in relation to non-household municipal waste recycling and best practice	Yes, support			
<b>Regulation and policy development</b>				
Actions 20 to 23 in relation to the development of policy and regulation pertaining to non-household municipal waste	Yes, support			
<b>Data, performance targets and reporting</b>				
Actions 24 and 25 relating to data, performance targets and reporting of non-household municipal waste	Yes, support			

We agree in principle.

We note that there is a lack of awareness around the existence and requirement of business recycling. This may be caused by several factors such as language barriers, scale etc. There would need to be multilingual support for communication campaigns on the self-assessment, and a capacity assessment tool would assist in this regard. Micro businesses in particular would benefit from such an approach. This is compounded by the lack of adherence to regulations and not being adequately monitored or enforced (e.g. Food Waste Regulations)

There are also resource implications for councils -potential to result in increased business waste enquiries contacting councils as the first point of contact. The approach needs to be sequenced correctly, with any discussions on service standards planned and agreed with Local Authorities in advance of campaigning and roll out of guidance.

Actions 20 & 21. We recommend enforcing current legislation rather than increasing the scope. There are significant implications in terms of costs, additional resources, and accessibility. This could impact on existing council service schedules and resources.

In order to meet the proposed targets, an extension of recycling obligations to non-household municipal waste will be necessary and consideration needs to be given to the unintended consequences of these actions, e.g. potential fly-tipping.

Councils already provide information under Waste DataFlow - we would welcome that it be expanded to include third party commercial operators.

In relation to Q23. there is the potential to breach licensing capacity requirements and impact on recycling rate/targets. Furthermore, the infrastructure does not currently exist on our sites e.g. weighbridges to capture and charge for commercial waste and the design of current sites may not easily facilitate this approach.

It is imperative that the non-household waste & commercial sector contributes proportionately to the municipal waste targets and that the desired improvements in recycling rates are not sole preserve of the household sector.

## Commercial and industrial waste

Robust data on commercial and industrial waste arisings is not on a par with household and non-household municipal waste data due to the lack of mandatory reporting.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically commercial and industrial waste.

The target and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

### Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

### Actions

DAERA commits to the following:

#### *Obtaining improved data on C&I waste*

- 26) For industrial sectors outside the scope of NHM waste, gather baseline data on C&I arisings, composition and recycling performance by the end of June 2027.

#### *Providing guidance and support tools for businesses*

- 27) Work with Invest NI and business sector groups to maintain awareness of the technical advisory support available to businesses and organisations in scope of future industrial recycling targets.

**Question 11: Do you support the following actions set out for commercial and industrial waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Obtaining improved data on C&amp;I waste</b>				
Action 26 proposed to increase recycling by obtaining improved data on C&I waste.	Yes, support			
<b>Providing guidance and support tools for businesses</b>				
Action 27 proposed to provide guidance and support tools to producers of commercial and industrial waste.	Yes, support			

## Construction and demolition waste

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically construction and demolition waste.

Under the revised [Waste Framework Directive](#), C&D waste is a priority waste stream. It sets the following objectives:

- Promote selective demolition to enable removal and safe handling of hazardous substances and facilitate reuse and high-quality recycling by selective removal of materials and to ensure the establishment of sorting systems for construction and demolition waste at least for wood, mineral fractions (concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics, stones), metal, glass, plastic and plaster.
- Reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.

The targets and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

### Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

### Actions

#### *Increasing and improving C&D waste treatment*

To increase and improve C&D waste treatment, DAERA commits to the following:

- 28) Undertake a review of C&D waste data to identify improvements in how it is captured, the treatment routes utilised and the overall composition of C&D waste to identify reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery opportunities by the end of June 2027.
- 29) Based on these data improvements, develop a baseline for C&D waste arisings and current reuse, recycling and recovery rates by the end of June 2027.

**Question 12: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to improve construction and demolition waste recycling and diversion from landfill and ensuring better data collection in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Construction and demolition waste</b>				
Actions 28 and 29 proposed to improve construction and demolition waste recycling and diversion from landfills and ensure better data collection.				Action 28 - We agree a review is welcomed and feel it is relevant to the draft circular economy document. Carbon impact of these materials is significant and agree this data is needed.  Action 29 – Yes, support

DRAFT

## Hazardous waste

Hazardous wastes are those that are deemed dangerous to human health or the environment and are difficult to handle. Hazardous waste is being generated by households and across multiple industrial sectors, and there is scope to reduce the amount through targeted waste prevention programmes.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically hazardous waste.

The target and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

### Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

### Actions

To reduce the use of and exposure to hazardous substances, and to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland, DAERA commits to:

- 30) Continue to monitor the issues of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in waste and engage with and update stakeholders on their legal requirements and any other issues arising.
- 31) Ensure all sites accepting hazardous waste codes have been fully trained in Technical Guidance WM3.
- 32) In collaboration with industry, the third sector and councils, build on existing schemes to establish widespread collection platforms via HRCs for surplus paint from household and commercial waste streams by the end of December 2027.
- 33) Undertake effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous waste.
- 34) Eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) by the end of December 2025, in line with commitments under the Stockholm Convention.

**Question 13: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland, in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

We broadly agree and support these actions.

We would like to see the introduction of clear and proportionate guidance on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Northern Ireland, similar to those issued across the rest of the UK.

The segregation of this waste will be required, having implications on the amount, size and available space to separate and store POPs as needed. The resources and viable sites to permit incineration and shredding of POPs is also limited. The Strategy should explicitly recognise this distinction and support clear public and commercial guidance on segregation requirements.

We welcome the reuse and separation of paint from households (at Household Recycling Centres) but not (currently) commercial premises. This has potentially significant cost/resource implications which could eventually burden rate-payers. Ultimately the accountability needs to remain with the waste producer.

In line with commitments under the Stockholm Convention, we support the action to eliminate polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs.) However, we are conscious of the timeline indicated and whether it is achievable. The manufacturers should lead on eliminating PCB's. There is concern over enforcement and who will have the authority to implement or make these actions happen. We also note the lack of measurable outcomes or metrics to support actions.

The council notes that DAERA “Undertake effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous waste” and welcomes this commitment to ensure that sites containing hazardous waste likely to impact on human health and the environment are effectively managed through regulation and where necessary timely enforcement.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Hazardous waste</b>				
Actions 30 to 34 proposed to reduce the use of and exposure to hazardous substances, and to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland	Action 30- Yes Action 31- Yes, site staff should be OCC trained; any additional training will have resource and cost implications which should be factored into any final decisions. Action 32-Yes, not with commercial paint but there is scope for community reuse of household paint Action 33-Yes, though mechanisms and approach would need to be detailed Action 34- Has this been achieved? How is it enforced tracked and monitored?			

## Agricultural waste

Given the large agricultural sector tonnage generated in Northern Ireland and the high concentration of both organic and plastic waste within the arisings, there appears to be great potential for the sector to contribute to the 70% recycling target, if deemed within scope of the definition.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically agricultural waste.

The targets and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

### Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

### Actions

***Support farmers move up the waste hierarchy and improve recycling of waste materials.***

- 35) Work with key stakeholders to improve information on waste arisings in the agricultural sector by the end of December 2028.
- 36) Work with stakeholders to establish and celebrate the good resource and waste management practice already in existence in the agricultural sector in Northern Ireland and provide new support tools and guidance to enable the sector to manage waste more effectively by the end of December 2028.
- 37) Review existing data sources, opportunities to improve data capture and options to share information useful for the sector to improve performance by the end of December 2028.

**Question 14: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to increase recycling of materials arising from the agricultural sector in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Agricultural waste</b>				
Actions 35 to 37 proposed to increase recycling of materials arising from the agricultural sector	No opinion			

## Litter and fly-tipping

Litter causes negative local environmental impacts, is unsightly and costs local ratepayers money to be removed. Fly tipping is generally defined as the illegal dumping of rubbish or bulky items on land without a licence or permit to accept waste. It pollutes the land and waterways and can be dangerous to human and animal health.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically litter and fly-tipping. The targets and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

### Targets

6. DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and will continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials.

### Actions

DAERA commits to the following:

#### Litter

- 38) Legislate for beverage containers and bottles to have lids and caps that will remain attached (tethered) to reduce commonly littered bottle caps by the end of December 2026.
- 39) Prepare regulations to restrict the sale or supply of ten commonly littered single-use plastic items by the end of December 2026.
- 40) Prepare regulations to implement clearer labelling of products that contain single use plastic to allow customers to make informed choices by the end of December 2026.
- 41) Prepare regulations to set a requirement for 25% average recycled content in PET bottles by 2025 and 30% average recycled content in all beverage bottles by 2030 to reduce the amount of virgin plastic that is used in manufacture by the end of December 2026.
- 42) Prepare regulations to restrict the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic to help tackle plastic & micro-plastic pollution by the end of December 2025.
- 43) Develop a proposal for a consumption reduction plan and targets for single use plastic takeaway cups and food containers to reduce unnecessary waste and tackle plastic pollution by the end of December 2026.

### *Fly-tipping and Illegal Waste Disposal*

- 44) Work to implement a consistent approach to data collection across Northern Ireland regarding fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal.
- 45) Aim to sign up all district councils to the Fly-Tipping Protocol by the end of March 2026.
- 46) We will continue to collaborate with the voluntary producer responsibility scheme for chewing gum.

### **Question 15: Do you agree with the following actions proposed to reduce litter and fly-tipping in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?**

We agree with these actions and alignment with the EU Single Use Plastics Directive.

More detailed information is required, on who will enforce this legislation at point of sale. Council does not have the resources, and any additional resources will need to be funded.

Thought should be given to unintended consequences replacing plastic items with alternatives (e.g. paper/fibre) which may lead to difficulty with waste clean ups.

Clear labelling may help customers make informed decisions, however, from an enforcement perspective, behaviour change, and public awareness campaigns are needed. Individuals who intentionally litter may not be influenced by labelling/single use plastic. Further clarification required on responsible enforcing authority for labelling requirements. Will compliance be monitored at point of manufacture or sale? There may be challenges for reprocessors – e.g. lids may be of a different polymer type (e.g. HDPE/PP) compared to the bottle plastic (e.g. PET) Different types of plastic may need to be separated during the processing stage. This could lead to increased costs for councils. We would encourage ongoing engagement with reprocessors and material recovery operators. This needs to be enforced at manufacture stage and as such industry may be better placed to respond to this proposal.

From a council perspective, an increase in demand for recycled plastics could potentially improve markets and the quality of collected PET could become more valuable. The EPR scheme incentivises producers however the DRS approach will potentially leave council with reduced recycling tonnages.

Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) Regulation (Northern Ireland) was introduced on 18th November 2025, with an 18-month transition period (to May 2027). We welcome the proposals as they aim to reduce plastic pollution and protect sewage systems and waterways.

The consumption reduction plan will prevent littering caused by take away/food/café outlets. Guidance with details on how/who will enforce and ensure compliance with local retail premises is needed. This also supports the Circular Economy and Waste Reduction, tying in with the Single Use Plastics (EU) Directive – NI to reduce the consumption of SUP cups and food containers by 2026.

In establishing a framework for fly-tipping we welcome the plans, providing they:

- Improve data quality and comparability between councils.
- Support policy making and enforcement as well as resource allocation (if any) at regional and local levels.
- Enable targeted interventions and better evaluation of waste crime reduction measures.

Staff training may be required to ensure consistent reporting of incident types, locations, volumes and enforcement outcomes, having potential resource implications on council. We would agree that it would be beneficial to get all remaining councils signed up as better co-ordination is essential for tackling waste crime. Overall, we welcome the continued collaboration with the VPR scheme and recognise significant financial burden associated with gum related litter and street cleaning. We note the value of producer funded clean-ups and behaviour change initiatives. But we emphasize the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability, adequacy and consistency of funding under voluntary arrangements and would highlight that statutory producer responsibility mechanisms may promote greater certainty for future planning.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Litter</b>				
Actions 38 to 43 propose to reduce litter	Yes - support			
<b>Fly-tipping and Illegal Waste Disposal</b>				
Actions 44 to 46 propose to reduce fly-tipping	Yes – Support			

## Overall

**Question 16: Do you agree that the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy covers the main issues and key considerations for all seven waste streams detailed in Part 2?**

- Agree

Generally, agree.

However, we would highlight that it is disappointing that there are no clear targets (e.g. recycling targets) for the litter and fly-tipping category, detailed in Part 2.

We would also suggest that batteries could be a standalone, separate waste stream in their own right (rather than being included in the hazardous waste category) and standalone reference could be given to clinical waste too.

In addition, we would ask - how will domestic infrastructure be funded and developed in a timely manner to ensure that materials collected can be recycled (not just collected and sorted), and decrease reliance on export markets or energy recovery as a solution?

Local authorities already risk facing additional costs for disposal as a result of changes to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and failing to develop adequate and appropriate recycling infrastructure for materials that do not currently have recycling solutions at scale increases the risk of these costs further.

## Part 3: Making It Happen

Part 3, Making it Happen, Discusses the necessary conditions for effective resource management, including infrastructure, collaboration, communication, research, and enforcement.

This part of the strategy covers five areas of action to deliver the strategy and build on the waste stream specific actions.

- Infrastructure and Capacity
- Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals
- Communication and Engagement
- Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future
- Enforcement

National reviews show that Northern Ireland does not have sufficient capacity to process all the potentially available mixed recyclables from household and commercial sources, nor does it have the medium-term landfill capacity to dispose of residual waste. It is therefore important that we put additional focus on the other four areas within this section.

The multi-faceted nature of the waste sector means there is a diverse range of stakeholders and having due regard to the impact new policy and legislative decision making has on the sector is of key significance. Working together with the sector is the only way to achieve this.

### Infrastructure and capacity

Waste management infrastructure is needed to make sure that waste and recyclables generated are handled safely, managed and processed into new products. A robust infrastructure is needed to respond to the changing volume and composition of waste and ideally treated or disposed of within the region in which it is produced. Planning and development decisions must be based on robust and up to date data and are evidence based.

#### Actions

##### *Enabling improved waste infrastructure capacity*

- 47) DAERA will respond to all input requests that are submitted to DAERA for planning of waste infrastructure.
- 48) To continue to monitor non-hazardous landfill capacity and continue to assess the level of permitted and planned landfill infrastructure.
- 49) Engage with each of the three local council waste management groups to identify how their waste management plans may need to be updated regarding waste management infrastructure by the end of April 2027.

**Question 17: Do you agree with the following actions relating to waste infrastructure and capacity in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Infrastructure and capacity</b>				
Actions 47 to 49 proposed in relation to infrastructure and capacity	Yes, support			

NI does not have the required domestic capacity to deal with all of its waste arisings. NI only has one large scale, operational Energy from Waste (EFW) plant with most of the residual waste now being exported for energy recovery.

From a Planning perspective, the Council supports the three recommended actions aimed at improving waste infrastructure capacity. As outlined in section 3.2.3 of the draft Strategy, councils must ensure their Local Development Plans (LDPs) align with the SPPS's regional waste management objectives. Belfast's Plan Strategy (PS), adopted in May 2023 following Independent Examination, provides the operational planning framework for waste infrastructure through policies W1–W5. These policies closely reflect DfI's PPS 11, which no longer applies in Belfast following adoption of the PS.

The Council is now preparing the second LDP document, the Local Policies Plan (LPP). The SPPS (2nd Edition) requires councils to assess future waste management facility needs and identify specific sites where necessary. Engagement with stakeholders in May 2025, including arc21 and BCC, concluded that there is currently no requirement to identify specific waste management sites within the Belfast City Council area.

Waste management stakeholders are fully aware of the growth ambitions set out in the Community Plan and LDP, including projected increases between 2020–2035 of 66,000 residents, 46,000 jobs, 31,600 homes, and 550,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace. Given that the existing Waste Management Plan (WMP) dates from 2015, it is essential that any updated WMP aligns with and supports these growth objectives. An up-to-date Resources and Waste Management Strategy (WMS) and Consistent Collections/Simpler Recycling document will be welcomed, as both documents are important material considerations when assessing planning applications for waste facilities, particularly in establishing need.

DAERA responding to planning input requests - The current system, where DAERA's Planning Response Team coordinates consultation responses on waste-related planning applications, works effectively.

Monitoring non-hazardous landfill capacity - This is a reasonable approach. While the LDP aims to reduce reliance on landfill, such development is not prohibited. Policy W3 sets out criteria for assessing landfill proposals, including demonstrating need through the WMS and WMP, alongside environmental and transport considerations.

Engagement with council waste management groups by April 2027 -The Council supports this action, given the importance of the Waste Management Strategy and Waste Management Plan in informing planning decisions on waste infrastructure. We welcome engagement with the regional waste management groups to review and update waste management plans. The council recognises the importance of ensuring that infrastructure planning remains aligned with evolving waste arisings, policy targets and market conditions.

BCC notes that any plan update should carefully consider existing contractual arrangements, infrastructure investments and system resilience.

## Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals

The resource and waste sector is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional sector with a significant number of stakeholders.

The roles and responsibilities assigned to the various parties in the resource and waste sector in Northern Ireland will support a number of the targets outlined in this strategy.

This strategy sets out **a call to action for collective responsibility**, and over the lifetime of this strategy, we aim to enable all players in the sector to work collaboratively to support the implementation of the actions detailed in this strategy, this will involve **collaboration between Government, industry and wider stakeholders**. There are no specific actions under this section of the strategy, but DAERA are interested in your views in relation to the **list of proposed stakeholders, partners and sectors**:

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Department for the Economy
- Northern Ireland's councils
- Council waste management groups
- Waste management companies
- Reprocessors
- Communities
- Representative Body / Member Organisations and Trade Bodies
- Business and industry
- The agricultural sector
- The construction and demolition sector
- Environmental organisations and NGOs
- Research and Development
- Education
- Healthcare

**Question 18: The Department envisages working with the stakeholders, partners and sectors listed above. Are there any additional stakeholders, partners and sectors that should be included?**

Other statutory organisations/government and government representative bodies which should be considered:

DFI  
NI Water (re: wastewater treatment issues/ blocked sewers etc.)  
LARAC  
WRAP  
PSNI (re waste crime, organised illegal dumping and cross border waste movement.)  
EPA - Ireland (re Transfrontier shipment of waste, shared recycling markets, policy alignment, Windsor Agreement etc.)  
Pack UK & Exchange for Change (re EPR and DRS)  
Infrastructure and Energy sector (e.g., energy companies, infrastructure investors, EFW operators.)  
Potentially - health and social care trusts  
NILGA (local government representation)  
Queens University & Ulster University.

## Communication and engagement

There are a diverse range of stakeholders across the waste sector and their ability to work together to support the delivery of new policy and be involved in legislative decision making is significant.

### Target

7. DAERA will continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.

### Actions

To facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders and bring about behavioural change in relation to resources and waste DAERA will:

- 50) Continue to utilise behaviour change theory and interventions to generate necessary improvements in correct recycling from citizens at home and in the workplace.
- 51) Continue to communicate and engage with stakeholders in support of new policies and regulations through the Communications and Engagement Plan.
- 52) Support existing and new strategic partners in the delivery of communications and engagement activities, including coordinating messages and campaigns across government departments.
- 53) Continue to partner with external organisations, where appropriate, to deliver campaigns to engage the education sector and address target waste streams, global waste problems and littering.
- 54) Work to establish a Northern Ireland Business Recycling Advisory Group by the end of March 2026.
- 55) Work in partnership with Northern Ireland National Communications Action Plan (NCAP) to co-ordinate the delivery of national and local communication activities with Councils to improve the quality and quantity of household recycling, including changes to recycling services.

**Question 19: Do you agree with the following actions proposed to facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Communications and engagement</b>				
Actions 50 to 55 proposed to facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in relation to resources and waste	Yes – Support			

We agree with the proposed actions to strengthen communications and engagement and recognise the actions are critical to the successful delivery of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy.

**Action 50- Utilise behaviour change theory**

We agree there is a need for consistent messaging and support and welcome continued collaboration. We await the Collections Consistency guidance from DAERA, to assist in the messaging to residents and businesses.

**Action 51- Communications and Engagement Plan**

We query accessibility to the plan and how we can review it for further comment. What are the roles and responsibilities and alignment of the messaging within that plan? What is the framework for the plan, what are the proposals, actions and targets and also what are the resource implications for councils?

**Action 52 – Strategic Partners**

We support in principle, but the mechanism for how strategic partners will assist councils is unclear. The proposals feel vague and need more detail on delivery and accountability.

**Action 53 – External Organisations**

Clarification is needed on how groups such as Eco-Schools and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful will be involved. There should be evaluation of links to the school curriculum and clearer expectations for public engagement.

**Action 54 – NI Business Recycling Advisory Group**

Welcomed, especially the stronger focus on business and commercial waste. Household waste has already been optimised significantly, so shifting attention to commercial waste is appropriate and necessary.

**Action 55 – NI NCAP**

Use of ACORN data and demographic targeting is positive. However, with EPR funding tied to performance, councils receiving reduced EPR payments despite best endeavors may need additional support.

## Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future

The shift from a linear to a circular economic model will inevitably drive changes in skill and training needs and will require many stakeholders' inputs to successfully deliver the changes required.

**Targets:** To play its part, DAERA will:

8. DAERA will continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.
9. DAERA will work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.

**Actions:** To build a pathway towards improved skills and training, DAERA will:

- 56) Enable the skills related to resources and waste management, such as design, repair and refurbishment, necessary to transition to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy. Work with other stakeholders to ensure this is also included in just transition planning.
- 57) Continue to support research and development of innovative technologies and solutions that will help improve the waste management sector in Northern Ireland and the transition to a circular economy.
- 58) Provide funding to support third sector organisations to enable the updating of skills and training needs.

**Question 20: Do you agree with the following actions on skills, training and research required for the future in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Skills, training and research</b>				
Actions 56 to 58 proposed in relation to research, innovation and skills	Yes, support			

Agree in principle.

However, we note that the timeframes are very tight- e.g., food waste recycling and again the lack of metrics to quantify objectives is apparent. Therefore it is difficult to understand how these objectives will be measured and what level of success they achieve.

We would like to see details on how these points are being actioned and what the expectations are of councils?

We embrace using innovative approaches and technology, as long as they are balanced with carbon off setting and support service delivery for staff and service users.

We strongly support the commitment to coordinated engagement across government departments, councils, strategic partners and external organisations. We also agree that support is needed in third sector organisations as these organisations often play a key role in community engagement, education and the delivery of reuse and repair initiatives. We look forward to further clarification on this subject and opportunities for collaboration.

## Enforcement

Compliance with regulations is an important element in ensuring that we continue to maintain a safe and healthy environment in Northern Ireland. Protection and enhancement of Northern’s Ireland’s environment is integral to this strategy and supporting compliance with local and international legislation and standards and using effective and consistent enforcement are central to those priorities.

### Targets

10. DAERA will continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime’s involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

### Actions

To address these challenges, DAERA commits to:

- 59) Introduce a single Incident Management System which will assist in centralising data capture/incident management across a range of business areas (including illegal waste activity) by the end of March 2026.
- 60) Seek to ensure that all newly obligated subsectors are aware of their respective responsibilities. This will improve effective enforcement.
- 61) Increase capacity and capability to receive, assess, develop and disseminate intelligence. Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy.
- 62) Develop our understanding of Organised Crime Groups and crime types to ensure we deploy our resources where we will have the highest impact. Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy.
- 63) Develop partnership working to deliver disruption and enforcement interventions. Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy.

**Question 21: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to improve compliance and enforcement in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.**

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
<b>Enforcement</b>				
Actions 59 to 63 proposed to improve compliance and enforcement	Yes, broadly support			

Action 59- Incident Management System: Is this a system for DAERA only or is it an accessible system that Councils can input into? Councils have their own systems, and existing approach would be to email a referral to NIEA. Will this new system allow collaboration with existing reporting structures?

Will the system be integrated into an existing system? Will it be only for large scale /hazardous incidents? NIEA identify small to medium scale fly tipping as under 20m cubed using volume rather than type. Will the new system factor these parameters, and will there be cross organisation alignment?

Council is open to accessing a system that enables a better joint-up approach, which ensures better organisation and effective management of incidents.

The current stage of development and implementation of this system is needed. Also training on using the system will be required, as well as any GDPR data sharing considerations outlined.

We note an announcement at the end of March on council powers to deal with fly-tippers: <https://www.circularonline.co.uk/news/new-council-powers-can-force-fly-tippers-to-clear-dumped-waste/>

Action 60 - We welcome this and are keen to understand and have the subsectors identified. We would appreciate more detail on the planned approach and how will this be actioned- what is the mechanism to ensure responsibilities are outlined and how will it be enforced?

Action 61- Again, this statement fails to outline the detail on resourcing and how it's going to be delivered. We are keen to understand what the increase in capacity is and what's not working – perhaps an approach that measures and produces metrics to understand how information is received, assessed and developed into useful intelligence. Greater clarity required.

Action 62 - Support in principle.

Action 63 - Partnership with council is welcomed, we would request an outline and clarity on roles and responsibilities and any resource implications that may occur from this. Will there be a partnership framework and what is the planned approach to governance? We welcome the approach but believe more information is needed, to gauge an understanding of how success and outcomes are to be measured.

## Part 4: Monitoring Progress

The aims, actions and targets set out in this strategy represent an ambitious new vision for the future of waste management. To deliver this we recognise that DAERA has a key role in providing strong leadership, both in terms of driving progress through our own commitments but also, where required, bringing stakeholders and key players together in pursuit of a greater vision. Supporting governance structures, alongside clear performance indicators and baselines, is vital to ensure the required changes are delivered and appropriate monitoring and evaluation can be carried out to measure our progress over the life of the strategy.

Looking beyond Northern Ireland, it is imperative we work with other UK nations and Republic of Ireland to join up policy so that we can achieve shared goals. This includes continuing participation in relevant forums, such as the Resources and Waste Common Framework and the North/South Ministerial Council, as well as regular engagement at official level.

Alongside the high-level indicators, individual targets and actions set out in the strategy will be monitored, totaling 10 targets and 63 actions covering waste prevention; recycling; other recovery; disposal; better regulation and enforcement, and communication and engagement.

A fundamental part of monitoring will be regular reporting on progress against each action and target. DAERA will produce a report midway through the 6-year period of this strategy to update on progress. A final review and report will be completed following the end of the 6-year period. There are no specific actions under this section of the strategy, but DAERA are interested in your views in relation to the following question.

**Question 22: Do you agree with the approach described in Section 4 of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy to monitoring and evaluation? Disagree**

A commitment to report progress against actions and to undertake a mid-term and final review is positive. We believe further details are needed on who will be inputting into or capturing this information.

The following areas require further clarification and strengthening:

- Monitoring framework methodology with further details on:
  - o What data will be collected to assess performance
  - o How indicators and targets will be measured and validated
  - o Whether consistent methodologies will be applied across all actions and outcomes

We feel the proposed approach of a mid-term report and a final review over a six-year period is insufficient. We would encourage more frequent (annual) reporting. This would enable earlier identification of issues or under performance, support timely intervention and corrective action and also improve transparency and accountability.

The reference to Digital Waste Tracking is noted. However, further clarification required on:

- How digital systems will support monitoring and evaluation
- Whether data will be integrated across different sources and organisations
- How data quality and consistency will be ensured

This section also refers to working with the sector. Clarification is sought on:

- Which stakeholders will be involved (e.g. LAs, industry etc.)
- How these stakeholders will contribute to monitoring and evaluation
- Whether there will be formal mechanisms for ongoing engagement and feedback.

There is limited detail on how monitoring will drive accountability and improvement. Monitoring should not be limited on reporting progress; it should actively support continuous improvement. It could also be linked to decision making processes and resource allocation.

## Part 5: Supporting Documentation

The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (WCLO) places a statutory obligation on DAERA to produce a waste management plan and revise it every sixth year. The legislation also sets out that the overall objective of the plan must be protecting the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the generation of waste and the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste, and by reducing overall impacts of resource use and improving resource efficiency.

### Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 Requirements (WCLO)

**Question 23: Referring to Appendix 3b of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, do you agree the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 requirements for a waste management plan are sufficiently addressed throughout the strategy?**

- Agree

The strategy appears to broadly acknowledge the statutory requirements of the W&CLO. However, it does not provide full clarity on how some requirements will be operationalized or monitored. As per our previous answers, although the strategy outlines high level objectives and commitments, it lacks detail and substance.

DAERA has demonstrated awareness of each requirement including policies, consultation, surveys, conformity with broader plans and integration with LA plans as well as optional requirements – such as the surveys and investigations in 5b. These requirements are being actively addressed with planned updates – however, DAERA could better clarify how these will be incorporated once results become available.

With reference to the surveys commissioned to assess waste arisings and waste composition – this is most welcome, considering the previous analysis was conducted almost a decade ago and the nature of waste streams may have changed significantly over this time period. We note that in addition to an updated datasheet in respect to Municipal Waste, Commercial and Industrial Wastes and Construction, Demolition and Excavation Wastes will also be included within this study.

With regards to the proposals within the current Consultation, to include additional waste streams such as Hazardous Waste, Agricultural Waste and Litter and Fly-Tipping Waste, would compositional surveys be extended to include these waste streams?

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) are essential tools in ensuring that plans, programmes, and projects are developed in a way that safeguards the environment and protects biodiversity.

SEA is a systematic process used to evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of proposed strategies, plans, or programmes before they are adopted. It ensures that environmental considerations are integrated at an early stage of decision-making, supporting sustainable development and compliance with environmental legislation. SEA is a requirement of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 legislation and the Environmental Report is the final output of the SEA process.

The HRA is a legal requirement under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995. for any plan or project that could have significant effects on protected sites, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It assesses whether proposals could adversely affect the integrity of these designated sites and ensures that adequate measures are in place to avoid or mitigate harm.

Together, SEA and HRA provide a structured framework for balancing development needs with environmental protection, ensuring that decision-makers have the information necessary to make informed, legally compliant, and sustainable choices.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

**Question 24: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Environmental Report, assessing the potential impact of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy on the Northern Ireland environment?**

- Agree

The conclusions of the Environment Report (ER) are broadly supported in principle. However, there are a number of important limitations within the report which should be acknowledged.

For example, many of the positive environmental effects identified are conditional on the successful implementation of the strategy. The ER assumes the key actions, targets and infrastructure developments, as well as behavioural changes will be delivered as intended. However, these are not guaranteed.

The strategy is high level in nature and does not provide the detail or data required to enable a fully robust assessment of environmental impacts. In particular, the lack of detail regarding the location, scale and timing of future infrastructure means that certain impacts are identified as uncertain. Whilst this is consistent with the strategic nature of the document, it limits the extent to which significant effects can be fully evaluated at this stage.

Also, the report places considerable reliance on mitigation through existing regulatory frameworks, including planning and environmental permitting processes. The ER does not appear to fully consider the practical constraints associated with the delivery of waste infrastructure.

In Northern Ireland, delays and challenges within the planning system have the potential to significantly impact the timely development of required facilities. The ER does not meaningfully address issues such as planning delays or systemic barriers to infrastructure delivery. It assumes that infrastructure will be delivered and that planning and permitting will function effectively. It does not adequately address the risk that infrastructure could be delayed or denied. Final note, there is limited data provided on how environmental outcomes will be monitored over time.

## Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

### Question 25: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?

- Agree

Is noted that:

*“The Resources and Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland, as assessed, and with consideration of the mitigation measures set out for developments resulting from the strategy, will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. The assessment of actions in the Resources and Waste Management Strategy is high level, evidence-based and compliant with statutory requirements and is therefore suitable for submission alongside the Resources and Waste Management Strategy. The assessment has identified potential impact pathways but concludes that these can be effectively managed through comprehensive policy-level safeguards within environmental and planning policy that supports the strategy; mandatory project-level assessments and mitigation; robust monitoring and adaptive management systems; effective coordination with other plans and projects.”*

The HRA concludes that the draft strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, subject mitigation measure and the application of relevant regulatory controls. However, there are a number of limitations to the conclusions drawn – for example the HRA relies heavily on the assumption that potential impacts will be appropriately managed through existing planning, environmental assessment and regulatory processes. Whilst these safeguards are an essential part of the framework, the conclusions depend on their effective and consistent application.

The HRA does not fully explore the implications if these processes are delayed or constrained. Consideration must be given to the practical challenges associated with the delivery of waste infrastructure as well as recognition that the timely and appropriate development of such infrastructure is critical to achieving the objectives of this draft strategy.

Equality Screening is one of the key tools to enable public authorities to fulfil their statutory obligations and mainstream the Section 75 equality and good relations duties into policy development. It provides an opportunity to improve decision-making, support 'evidence based' policy making and can help improve a public authority's service provision through a systematic review of all services, policies, procedures, practices and/or decisions.

Public authorities must undertake a Rural Needs Impact Assessment when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment is a step-by-step process aimed at helping public authorities to ensure that the due regard duty imposed under section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ('the Act') duty is fulfilled.

#### Equality Screening Assessment (EQ Screen)

#### Question 26: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Equality Screening Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?

- Agree

There are a number of limitations within the screening:

- The conclusion of no significant impact appears to be based primarily on the high-level nature of the strategy rather than on a detailed assessment of how the proposed measures may affect different section 75 groups in practice. Whilst the strategy does not set out specific operational measures, it will influence future policy decisions service design and infrastructure development, all of which have the potential to result in differential impacts.

- In particular there is limited consideration of how the strategy may affect certain section 75 groups:

- **Disability** - changes to waste collections or systems, recycling requirements or services - accessibility issues may disproportionately impact individuals living with disabilities particularly where additional effort, mobility or understandings required to comply with new systems.

- **Age** - older people may face challenges in adapting to changes in waste management practices particularly where these involve more complex sorting requirements or physical handling of waste. Similarly younger people may be affected, depending on educational and awareness approaches.

- **Race and language** - individuals whose first language is not English may face barriers and understanding new requirements guidance or communications relating to waste management without clear and accessible information. This could impact levels of compliance and participation,

- **Dependents** - households with caring responsibilities may experience additional pressures in adapting to changes with systems particularly where these require increased time, storage space or management of multiple waste streams.

- While **social economic status** is not a section 75 category it is also relevant to note that changes in waste policy can have indirect impacts in lower income households for example through costs associated with compliance, access to services and the practicalities of managing waste. Individuals who are "digitally excluded" should also factor into this.

The screening indicates that equality considerations will be addressed at a later stage of implementation. However, there is limited detail on how this will be achieved in practice including how impacts will be identified monitored and mitigated as policies and services are developed.

In conclusion whilst the screening process has been undertaken appropriately, and the overall conclusion is reasonable in principle; it would benefit for a more detailed exploration of potential differential impacts across section 75 groups. Greater clarity on how equality considerations will be embedded throughout implementation, including ongoing assessment and engagement would strengthen confidence that the strategy will be delivered in an inclusive and equitable manner.

**Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)**

**Question 27: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?**

- Agree

The conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment are broadly supported in principle.

It is reasonable that given the high level and strategic nature of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, that the assessment concludes that there are unlikely to be significant adverse impacts on rural communities at this stage.

We note that it will likely be up to each local authority to consider how rural needs assessments are undertaken, with regards to waste service provision, (addressing how parity of service provision is maintained ensuring no unintentional disadvantage to rural service users.)

We would highlight section 2.6 of the Strategy (on Agricultural Waste) and suggest that adequate engagement is conducted with the Agricultural Sector in Northern Ireland to ensure that Rural Needs are addressed appropriately with regards to the draft strategy.

## Part 6: How To Respond

This consultation will run for **12 weeks**, opening on **15th of January 2026** and closing at **23:59 on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026**.

Responses to this consultation are to be completed online at the following link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>

### What we will do with your responses

When the consultation has closed, we will analyse your responses. Once analysed we will use these to publish a final Resources and Waste Management Strategy.

DRAFT

## ANNEX 1 Publication of Responses

### Confidentiality

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation may be disclosed on request. The Department can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations as these provide guidance on the legal position of any information given by you in response to this consultation. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.

### Data Protection

Section 8 (e) of the Data Protection Act 2018 permits processing of personal data when necessary for an activity that supports or promotes democratic engagement. Information provided by respondents to this consultation exercise will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation.

### Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority (the Department in this case). This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it as confidential in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances.

The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature;
- Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office: Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk) Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Resources and Waste Strategy Team  
Environmental Resources Policy Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs  
Jubilee House  
111 Ballykelly Road  
Ballykelly  
BT49 9HP

Email: [wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wastepolicyteam@daera-ni.gov.uk)



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®**  
We invest in people Standard



<b>Subject:</b>	GLL community engagement and underrepresented target groups update
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Paul McLoughlin, Partnership Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To provide members with the annual update for 2025 on community engagement and underrepresented group focused promotional activity.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	Members are requested:
2.1	To note and record receipt of the information provide below.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<u>Background</u>

Under the terms of the leisure contract between Belfast City Council (BCC) and GLL, the organisation is required to submit an annual report detailing community engagement initiatives from the previous year. These annual service reports are presented to the People and Communities Committee.

As a leading social enterprise, GLL prioritises ensuring full access for all members of the community, with the goal of encouraging more people to become more active, more often. CNS works in collaboration with GLL to promote community outreach and increase regular participation among traditionally underrepresented groups.

GLL employs a Regional Business Manager (RBM) whose primary focus is to drive participation and facility usage. The RBM ensures that individuals from all backgrounds are actively engaged in sports and physical activity.

To support this mission, the RBM oversees a team comprising three Community Sport Officers and ten Health Officers. Each team member follows a work programme aligned with strategic objectives, aiming to boost participation among both mainstream and underrepresented groups.

GLL remains committed to fostering community access by offering a range of opportunities within centres that are accessible, affordable, and welcoming.

Additionally, GLL reinvests in talent development through the GLL Sport Foundation, which provides ongoing support to talented individuals.

Notably, 64.7% of Belfast Pre-Paid GLL members benefit from discounted charges, helping to reduce affordability barriers and promote inclusivity in participation.

3.2

### Outcomes and Proposals

#### **Sport National Governing Body (NGB) and Club Programmes**

GLL continues to support a range of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in delivering holiday programmes, grassroots initiatives, and performance programmes. Over the summer months, GLL collaborated Northern Ireland Fencing, Liverpool Football Club Foundation, Basketball NI, Ulster Rugby and Ulster Boxing to provide coaching workshops.

Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre regularly hosts All-Ireland Water Polo League events and has also been the venue for several Ulster Swimming Galas. Ulster Boxing competitions are frequently held at centres such as Girdwood Community Hub, Ballysillan Leisure Centre, Brook Leisure Centre, and Whiterock Leisure Centre. Shankill Leisure Centre accommodates the Northern Ireland Futsal Federation League for both male and female participants and, in the autumn, began hosting Northern Ireland Fencing competitions. Additionally, BCC leisure centres to conduct coach education courses such as Swimming Pickleball and Diving.

BCC leisure centres, managed by GLL, are home to over 200 local sports clubs and performance squads. These centres provide essential training facilities for clubs and performance programmes, as well as hosting a wide variety of local and regional competitions. Sports supported include Gaelic games, boxing, fencing, football, futsal, tennis, table tennis, cricket, basketball, baseball, netball, softball, dodgeball, swimming, water polo, and martial arts.

#### **School & Youth programmes**

GLL collaborates with local Primary and Post Primary schools to provide facilities that support physical education programs. Belfast is home to 116 Primary Schools, 34 Post Primary Schools, and 13 Special Schools. Over the past year, GLL has facilitated school swimming lessons for 96 schools, comprising 84 Primary, 7 Post Primary, and 5 Special Schools.

The GLL Holiday Scheme operates during Easter, Summer, and Halloween, with 96 supervisors and instructors recruited to deliver these programmes. Across 13 centres, the scheme catered to 3,502 children during the three holiday periods, achieving 96.1% occupancy of the available spaces.

GLL's lessons and courses programme currently focuses on swimming, gymnastics, tennis, and climbing. In 2025, enrolment numbers included over 6,400 children for swimming lessons, 55 for diving, 154 junior participants for tennis, 263 for gymnastics, 116 for football and 293 for climbing lessons. In 2025, GLL plans to expand its swimming programme to accommodate 6,750 children weekly, alongside increased participation goals: 75 for diving, 175 for tennis, over 275 for gymnastics, 150 for football and over 200 junior participants for climbing.

GLL delivered our first Active and Able Camps, specifically aimed at children and young people who would typically require one-to-one support. A total of 56 participants attended five camps throughout the year at Avoniel, Belvoir Activity Centre, and Brook Leisure Centre. Feedback from parents and guardians was overwhelmingly positive, praising the attentiveness of the coaches and highlighting the important role these camps play in providing families with respite from their caring responsibilities.

### **Community Outreach**

In 2022, GLL introduced community engagement leads in each centre to spearhead local projects and support citywide initiatives. During December, 14 centres participated in the Cash for Kids Mission Christmas campaign, collecting over 1,000 gifts valued at approximately £15,000.

The organisation has also supported various mental health charities and initiatives through awareness campaigns and fundraising efforts. Additional staff were provided with mental health and disability awareness training throughout the year.

Brook Leisure Centre hosts the Colin Autism Support Group, offering a space for parents of children with autism and other learning disabilities.

Additionally, Avoniel, Templemore, and Andersonstown centres organised open days, welcoming community organisations to showcase their work to centre visitors.

In October, the Belfast Community Sport team conducted an outreach event at Girdwood Community Hub for Ulster University Sports Studies students. Over 70 students participated in a range of sports and activities during the event. GLL also used the occasion to highlight employment opportunities in Belfast, including student placements and its trainee manager scheme.

### **Older Participant Programmes**

By the end of 2025, more than 90% of Belfast's Pay and Play and Pre-Paid members were aged 60+, accounting for over 8,500 members. The Council continues to offer free access for individuals aged over 60 before 11:00 AM from Monday to Friday.

GLL provides a daily programme of activities tailored to older adults, with offerings expanding steadily throughout 2025. The citywide pool programme ensures that Swim for Fitness (lane swimming) and Swim for All (casual family swimming) options are available daily across Belfast. In addition, GLL runs an introductory physical activity programme designed for members seeking low-intensity, low-impact workouts.

Active ageing activities, such as Danderball, Aqua Aerobics, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Boccia, and Water Polo, are delivered across several centres, including Avoniel Leisure Centre, Brook Leisure Centre, Templemore Baths, Falls Leisure Centre, Girdwood Community Hub, Grove Wellbeing Centre, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Olympia Leisure Centre, Ozone, and Shankill Leisure Centre. Plans are already in place to further expand the programme in 2026.

Throughout the year, GLL Belfast actively participated in the PHA Active Aging partnership, promoting physical activity and well-being for older adults. Community outreach initiatives were also undertaken, with active mornings delivered weekly at Girdwood, Belvoir and Brook. These sessions engaged over 50 participants each week led by GLL Belfast Community Sport Coaches.

Belfast's flagship Active Ageing event, the Better Belfast Club Games, took place on Monday 20th October 2025 at Girdwood Community Hub. The event welcomed over 50 participants aged 60 and above from various centres across the city, who took part in a range of sports activities. The event was widely enjoyed, with overwhelmingly positive feedback, highlighting its success as a celebration of sport, community, and wellbeing for older adults.

GLL delivers specialised rehabilitation programmes for chronic conditions, including Cancer, Cardiac, Pulmonary, and MSK. Additionally, Diabetes and Strength & Balance programmes are hosted and supported, with many referrals being older adults.

Strategic partnerships and collaborative efforts are well-established between CNS, GLL, and key organisations such as the Public Health Agency, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, and charitable partners, ensuring effective pathways for chronic condition management.

Girdwood Community Hub also collaborates with the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, offering weekly low-intensity exercise sessions paired with arts and crafts activities.

### **People with Disabilities**

Belvoir Activity Centre, in collaboration with Disability Sport NI, serves as a dedicated disability sports hub, offering a variety of wheelchair-based sports and activities, including Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia, and New Age Curling.

The GLL Sport Foundation in Belfast currently supports four disabled and Paralympic athletes, providing them with facility access and physiotherapy assistance valued at £1,200 per year.

Brook Leisure Centre features a swimming pool specifically designed to accommodate sensory needs and a wide range of disabilities. The centre runs weekly 'quiet swims,' attracting approximately 20 to 30 participants per session. Belfast Leisure Centres are also introducing quiet gym sessions to support customers with neurodiversity.

GLL partners with Swimming Buddies, an organisation specialising in autism-friendly swimming lessons. These sessions are offered throughout the week at both Brook Leisure

Centre and Templemore Baths. Additionally, Brook Leisure Centre facilitates inclusive Air Venture sessions tailored to meet the sensory needs of participants.

2025 saw the launch of GLL's SEND swimming lessons. These lessons were made available across 7 of the centres in Belfast. (Ballysillan, Brook, Lisnasharragh, Olympia, Shankill, Templemore and Whiterock). In total 62 participants were enrolled in the programme and it is envisaged this will further increase in 2026.

GLL's Holiday Schemes are designed to be inclusive for everyone, including children with physical and learning disabilities. Historically, our ability to support individuals requiring one-to-one assistance has been limited due to constraints in staff resources, experience, and qualifications. This year, GLL established a partnership with Active Youth NI, a local Community Interest Company specialising in programmes for children and young people with physical and/or learning disabilities.

### **Women & Girls**

Women represent 48.2% of current Belfast members, totalling 19,872 individuals.

GLL has collaborated with Netball NI to deliver their social netball programme and has also hosted competitions at Lisnasharragh, Shankill and Olympia Leisure Centres.

Through the GLL Sport Foundation (GSF) programme, GLL supports 75 female athletes, accounting for 47.5% of all supported athletes. These women are empowered to compete at both national and international levels in their respective sports. Shirley McCay, Ireland's most capped sportsperson of all time, serves as the Legacy Ambassador for the GSF programme.

In partnership with WISPA, GLL delivers female-only fitness classes, including aqua aerobics, yoga, Pilates, and circuits. These sessions are offered at Avoniel Leisure Centre, Belvoir Activity Centre, Brook Leisure Centre, Olympia Leisure Centre, Shankill Leisure Centre, and Whiterock Leisure Centre.

### **Family Programming**

GLL has developed a well-rounded programme of activities across its centres to encourage family participation. For instance, a 'basic group exercise offering' allows junior members to join in with older family members.

Junior group exercise classes have been added to the timetable, with plans to expand this programme in 2026. Junior gym sessions are also available at all gym centres during after-school hours and school holiday periods. 207 hours of junior gym spaces were offered each week and in total over 48,000 junior attendances were recorded.

Family-friendly products such as water slides, Surf Belfast and the Aqua Play at Andersonstown Leisure Centre, Air Venture at Brook Leisure Centre, and Aqua Splash at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre continue to attract families, especially during weekends and holiday periods.

All centres offer birthday party packages, which are both affordable and varied, including bouncy castles, climbing walls, laser quest, and sports (both indoor and outdoor), as well as the aforementioned products. In 2025, GLL enhanced party room spaces at Lisnasharragh and Brook Leisure Centres to improve the overall service and quality. Plans are in place to further enhance spaces and offerings in 2026.

3.3	<p>Wet centres provide weekly family fun pool sessions, featuring floats and inflatables, to add to the enjoyment.</p> <p>Since launching the citywide family membership in August 2021, GLL has seen continued interest. By the end of December 2025, there were over 627 family memberships in Belfast, encompassing a total of 3,144 members.</p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>To consider and record receipt of the information provide above. CNS officers will be in attendance to respond to any queries raised by members.</p> <p><u>Communications &amp; Public Relations</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices</b>
	None



Subject:	GLL service report for 2025
Date:	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Paul McLoughlin, Partnership Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To present members with the annual GLL service report for 2025 as required within the terms of the leisure management contract and as previously reported through Active Belfast Limited.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are note the information provided below and at Appendix 1.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>

3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Under the terms of the leisure contract between BCC and GLL, GLL is required to provide an annual service report for the preceding year. This report is presented through the People and Communities committee.</p> <p>GLL is a charitable social enterprise operating under the Better brand.</p> <p>GLL is proud to continue its work with Belfast City Council, helping to transform leisure facilities and services across the city. GLL seeks to deliver a successful social business focusing on customer needs. As a not-for-profit organisation, GLL reinvests back into the community by developing staff, investing in BCC centres, supporting young athletes and increasing participation across all user groups.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Outcomes and proposals</u></p> <p>The ‘GLL in 2025’ document, attached at Appendix 1, highlights our key successes and challenges in 2025 focusing on the six guiding values at the heart of our business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner of Choice</li> <li>• Respecting the Planet</li> <li>• The Better Way of Doing Business</li> <li>• More Than a Job</li> <li>• Customers and Communities at our Heart</li> <li>• Tackling Health Inequalities</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>Members are requested to consider and record receipt of the information provided above and at Appendix 1. CNS officers will be in attendance to respond to any queries raised by members.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Communications &amp; Public Relations</u></p> <p><u>None</u></p>
3.5	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 GLL Service report for 2025



**Contents**

Introduction .....3

Do You Know We Have .....4

Partner of Choice .....5

Respecting the Planet .....6

Better Way of Doing Business .....7

More Than a Job.....8

Customers and Communities at our Heart .....9

Tackling Health Inequalities .....10

Health and Fitness.....11

Health and Fitness Memberships .....15

Marketing and Communications .....16

Annual User Survey .....17

Better Swim School (including Swimbies) .....18

SEND Swimming Lessons.....19

Tom Daley Diving Academy .....20

Better Swim School Gala .....21

Swim Teacher Development .....22

Belfast Swimming Club, Triathlon Club, Water Polo Club and Schools Programmes .....23

Top Team NI Lifeguarding Competition .....24

NPLQ Gen 10 Renewals .....25

RISE Gymnastics Programmes.....26

Climbing Programmes (including Adapted Climbing) .....29

Tennis Programmes.....30

Social Sport Programme.....32

Coach Education.....33

GLL Sport Foundation.....35

Holiday Scheme Programme .....37

Wider Community Sport Initiatives.....40

Liverpool Football Club Foundation Player Development Programme .....41

Active Aging Programmes .....42

Belfast Marathon and Half Marathon Programme .....43

Belfast Health Programmes.....44

Physical Activity Referral Scheme .....45

Chronic Conditions .....	47
Strategic Partnerships .....	49
Other Achievements and Learnings .....	50
Client Testimonials .....	52
2025 Target Achievements .....	54
Looking Forward to 2026 .....	57

## Introduction

GLL is a charitable social enterprise operating under the Better brand. We work to provide the best leisure services available. Our mission is to get more people, more active, more often, in our 17 leisure centres and gyms across Belfast.

GLL is proud to continue its work with Belfast City Council, helping transform leisure facilities across the city. To ensure our growth, we deliver a successful social business focusing on our customer's needs. As a Not-for-Profit organisation, we reinvest all our surplus back into the community by developing staff, investing in our centres, supporting young athletes and increasing junior and senior participation.

GLL manage 17 leisure facilities across Belfast.

*Figure 1: Overview of Leisure Facilities in Belfast*



This document highlights our key successes and challenges in 2025 focusing on the six guiding values that sit at the heart of our business.

- Partner of Choice
- Respecting the Planet
- A Better way of doing Business
- More than a Job
- Customers and Communities at our Heart
- Tackling Health Inequalities

The document will then outline the wide range of programmes and initiatives that have helped increase physical activity across Belfast while also supporting people in improving their social and mental wellbeing.

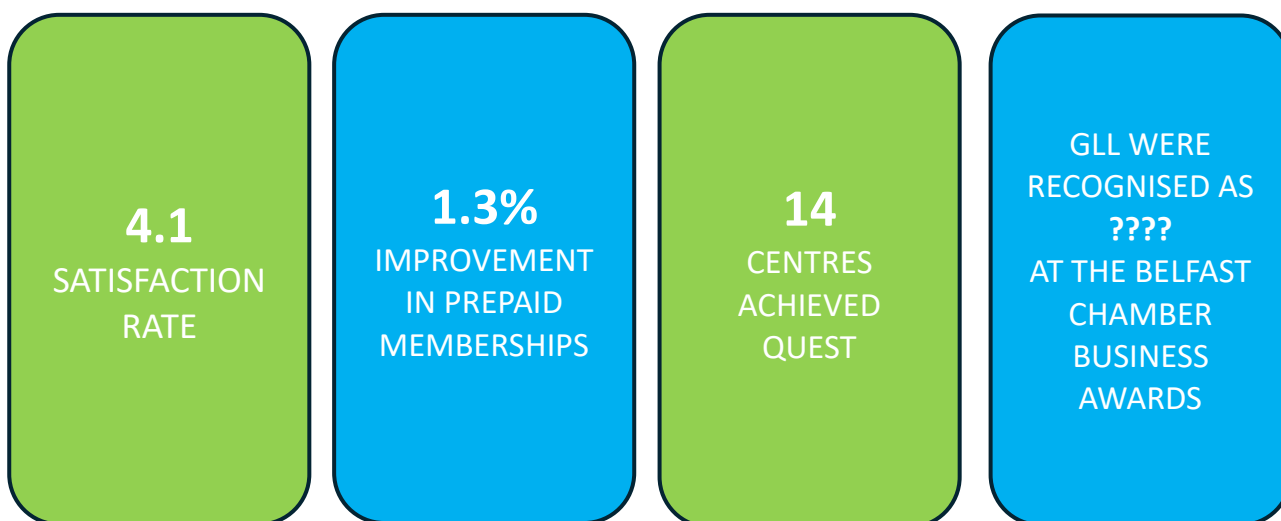
Do You Know We Have

Figure 2: Overview of Facility Offerings in Belfast



## Partner of Choice

- GLL has completed 10 years in Belfast and continues to deliver an extensive leisure programme on behalf of Belfast City Council. In 2025 the £800K was spent on projects across the city such as gym refurbishments and the creation of party spaces which is another strong example of the strength of this partnership.
- Prepaid membership increased by 684 in 2025 which represents a 2.9% improvement as prepaid membership broke beyond 24,300 for the first time in Belfast.
- Over 3,053 customers participated in our annual user survey which was up by 2.3% from the previous year. Belfast recorded 4.2 satisfaction rate out of 5, which we will continue to work to increase. Net Promoter Score was 43% in 2025 compared to 34% in 2024.
- 14 centres achieved Quest – The UK Quality Accreditation for Sport and Leisure and is a tool to help us offer 5-star service every time.
- Increased professional profile through memberships and award applications of business networks including Social Enterprise NI, Women in Business, NI Chamber of Commerce and Belfast Chamber of Commerce.
- GLL support the Belfast Giants in providing training spaces for their athletes. In return we can reward our staff with tickets for matches as well as have the opportunity to raise the profile of our centre and activate memberships via Giants fans on match nights.
- Templemore Baths hosted a range of conference and launch events. It now competes with established and versatile venues across the region.
- Top Team Lifeguard competition was hosted at Andersonstown Leisure Centre.



## Respecting the Planet

- The Partnership reduced energy consumption by a further 10% in 2025 compared to 2024. This was achieved through focused energy management plans and investment in energy efficient technology.
- The partnership reduced gas consumption by 10% consumption by 9%.
- Efficiencies with electricity usage across all 16 sites led to a reduction of 582 tons of CO2 in 2025 compared to 2024.
- Efficiencies with gas consumption across all 16 sites led to a reduction of 408 tons of CO2 in 2025 compared to 2024.
- Energy audits completed in Andersonstown, Brook, Lisnasharragh and Templemore to assist with creating a renewable investment strategy and building optimisation – actions expected on these projects in 2026.
- EV car charging points have been installed across numerous leisure sites within the city.
- GLL have gained Ambassador status to Belfast Business Promise. GLL are committed to deliver on pledge 3 of the promise; Protect our environment by working together to tackle the global challenge of climate change and protect our environment for future generations. GLL have signed up to the climate essentials platform to assist with lowering carbon emissions and develop a roadmap to net zero.
- The Belfast Partnership will continue to sit on the Belfast City Councils Climate projects team in 2026 along with other key stake holder, identifying co-operative projects for reducing carbon emissions and creating a greener Belfast.

## Better Way of Doing Business

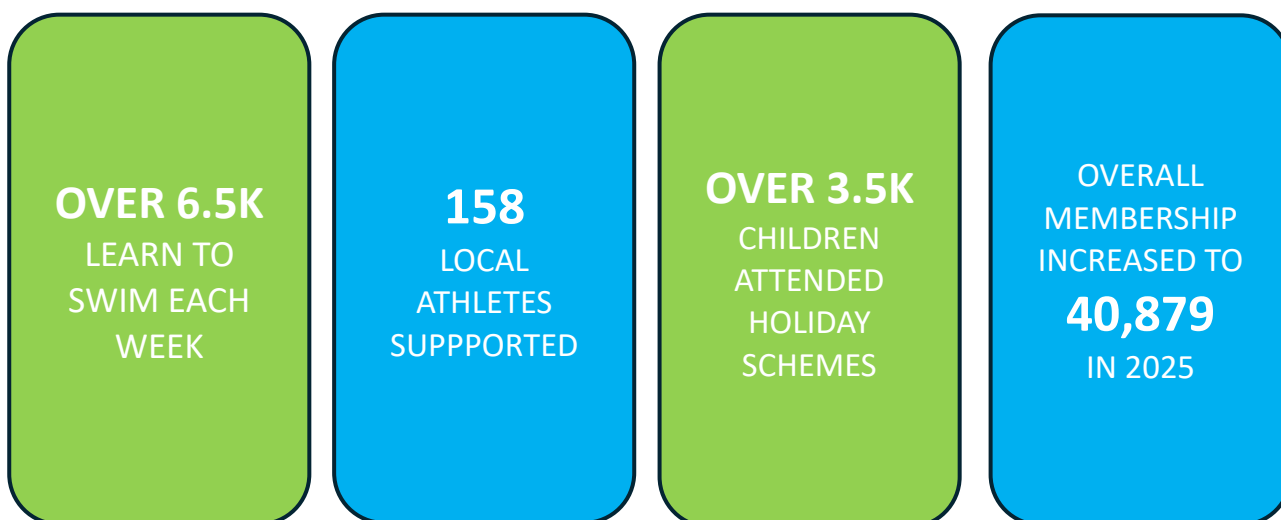
- Our continued social impact is only possible through sound business practice. We grew our memberships and usage while continuing to offer a variety of concessionary options for everyone.
- GLL became one of only ten organisations to achieve Ambassador Status in the Belfast Business Promise. A scheme for employers committed to responsible, inclusive and sustainable business practices.
- GLL sponsor a number of Belfast based events, awards and organisations to further promote our brand values. These include, the Eastside Awards, Belfast Marathon, Belfast Giants, Aisling Educational Bursaries, Social Enterprise NI Awards, Belfast City Council Sports Awards and Spirit of NI Awards.
- £2.8M of internal reinvestment projects have been delivered to date across the partnership since 2019. In 2025 GLL completed the following projects:
  - £38K Party Room development at Lisnasharragh
  - £20K Gym and Functional Area refurbishment at Olympia
  - £11.5K Strength Area refurbishment at Andersonstown
  - £23K Functional Area and Studio refurbishment at Belvoir
  - £24K Party Room development at Brook
  - £130K Reception Area and Full Gym refurbishment at Ballysillan
  - £88K Gym refurbishment at Whiterock
  - £8K Group Cycle Bike upgrade at Falls
  - £495K Female Changing Room upgrade and Full Gym and Studio refurbishment at Better Gym Connswater
  - £5.5K Functional Floor refit at Grove
- Digital innovation helped attract new customers and compete with other operators in leisure with over 95% of bookings being made online and the same joining online.
- Over 67K people engaged with the Better brand across social media sites such as X, Facebook and Instagram. Average daily reach exceeded 12K and in total over 7.32M impressions were achieved on Facebook.
- We established collaborations with Active Youth NI to deliver holiday camps for children with physical and learning disabilities and with Liverpool Football Club Foundation to deliver a Player Development Programme at Avoniel.

## **More Than a Job**

- We employ over 900 staff with over 85% living in the Belfast area. We have worked to create an environment where our staff understand the important of our social enterprise message.
- GLL is an accredited Investors in People Gold organisation and one of only 212 companies in Northern Ireland to implement the Real Living Wage.
- We continue to invest in our staff with a comprehensive internal and external training and development programme delivering various courses from National Pool Lifeguarding, Pool Plant Operator and Swimming Teaching Qualifications and an array of online training courses.
- A coaching and mentoring programme was created to support teamwork and motivation among staff across the city.
- We recruited 96 Children’s Activity staff to deliver Holiday Schemes at 12 centres.
- Our 2-year Trainee Manager Development Programme is in its 31st year, with 4 new recruits joining us each year to gain experience across all areas of the business.
- We recruited 3 student coach placements from Ulster University to work within our Community Sport team, delivering a variety of young and senior sport and physical activity programmes.
- Absentee rates remained a focal point in 2025. At start of the year this was 5.2% with highest percentage was in May (7.6%) and reduced to 4.6% in December. GLL we are actively working with management teams to reduce high sickness levels.
- We have been shortlisted in various awards in 2025. GLL were successful in winning Excellence in Contribution to the Community at the Belfast Business Awards. GLL were also high commended in the Social Value category.
- The importance of providing fully qualified staff was again championed at the Top Team Lifeguard event with participation from 40 staff from Belfast centres and observers from other Northern Ireland Local Authorities.
- We recognised the contribution of our teams at the GLL Communications Day with over 200 nominations for local staff awards. Held in the Europa Hotel this year we had a record 480 in attendance.

## Customers and Communities at our Heart

- We continued to offer our services to all user groups and actively promoted people getting involved in physical activity.
- Putting the customer at the heart of our business helped us increase our memberships to 40,879.
- Our GLL Sports Foundation supported 158 local athletes with over £115,000 bursaries, injury rehabilitation, education assistance and free memberships to all 17 centres.
- Over 6,500 children take part in swimming lessons every week learning a key life skill. This represents an 8% increase from the previous year.
- 3,502 children from across the city enjoyed our Holiday Schemes, taking part in activities such as football, swimming, dodge ball, tennis, basketball, pickleball and arts and crafts.
- The Club Games saw over 50 participants from 6 teams of over 60s competing in a range of sports and activities including pickleball, table tennis, darts, bowls and boccia.
- ukactive visited Belfast in November as Templemore Baths hosted their National Conference with GLL joining six other organisations and local authorities. GLL were provided with the opportunity to outline the community impact of leisure across the city since 2015.
- Over 15,000 people participated in Pickleball activities throughout the year. Over 80% of these participants were ages 50 and over.



## **Tackling Health Inequalities**

- Our 12-week Healthwise exercise referral programme helped 1,460 people referred through their GP or other NHS services to increase physical activity and rehabilitate from cardiac, cancer, obesity and other health related issues.
- 1,017 came through the Physical Activity Referral Scheme and 443 through the Chronic Conditions pathways.
- We deliver several active aging mornings across the city which include activities such as danderball, pickleball, table tennis, boccia and water polo.
- Concessionary membership options across all centres offered more affordable access to leisure for all sectors of the community.
- Belvoir Activity Centre serves as a disability sports hub in partnership with Belfast City Council and Disability Sports NI.
- We partner with Autism Swimming organisation Swimming Buddies to deliver autism specific swimming lessons at Brook Leisure Centre and Templemore Baths.
- We established SEND Swimming lessons across the city and will expand the programme to circa 100 participants in 2026.
- We offer an inclusive UK wide membership for people with a disability. This offers access to gyms, swimming pools and fitness classes at a discounted rate. Currently over 335 people in Belfast access this membership option.
- We operate a JAM card scheme which allows people with a hidden disability or communication barrier to tell others that they need extra time and understanding in a private and easy way.
- All new LTP leisure facilities are equipped with Changing Places facilities. These accessible toilet and showering facilities were created to meet the needs of disabled children and adults with complex care needs who require appropriate equipment and more space.
- Currently 8 pools across the city provide Pool pods. These pool platform lifts are transforming pool access and are used by wheelchair users and other customers with mobility issues to access the water.
- In partnership with Belfast City Council, we offer a digital sign language service 'Sign Video' via our concierge teams that assists customers who are deaf to communication effectively with staff members.

## Health and Fitness

### Gym Activity

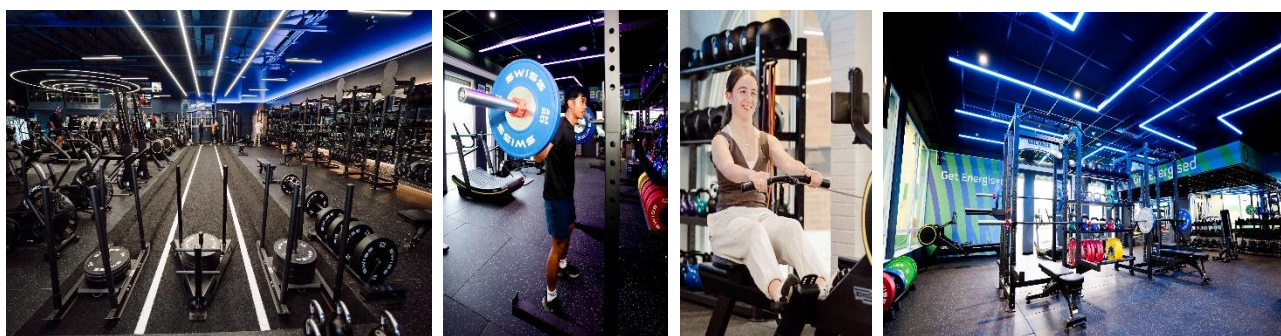
Fifteen of Belfast’s sixteen operational leisure centres now offer best-in-class gym spaces, equipped to a standard that rivals many private facilities and ensures members of every age can train with confidence. That investment continues to assist in greater utilisation, in 2025 alone, the city recorded an impressive 900,000 gym visits, reflecting a diverse community of users from post-primary school pupils discovering fitness for the first time to seniors staying active and connected.

GLL’s commitment to accessibility is also evident in its popular Pay and Play card for over-60s, which provides free access to the gym, group exercise classes and swimming before 11:00am Monday to Friday. It is a model that not only supports healthier ageing but strengthens the role of leisure centres as inclusive, community-focused spaces where everyone can pursue their wellbeing goals.

### Gym Improvements

GLL is continuing to push forward with significant investment in health and fitness across the city, reinforcing its commitment to modern, high quality leisure experiences for everyone. In 2025, a large percentage of GLL’s £850K project spend was provided to Andersonstown, Belvoir, Olympia, Grove, Ballysillan, Whiterock and Better Gym Connswater, transforming these centres with refreshed, purpose built spaces designed to meet the evolving needs of local communities.

These developments are not just about new equipment or upgraded facilities. They are about creating environments that inspire people to join, stay active and feel proud of where they train. By offering improved studios, enhanced gym floors and more welcoming social areas, GLL is supporting membership growth while giving loyal members the upgraded spaces they deserve to continue their health and fitness journey with confidence and motivation.



*Images 1 to 4: Gym Transformation Projects in 2025*

### Junior Gym

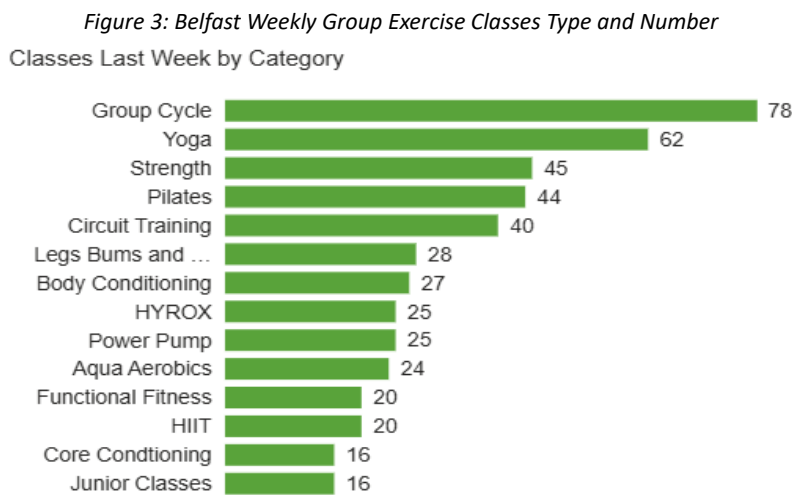
GLL’s Junior Gym programme runs across all Belfast leisure centres, giving young people a safe, structured, and energising space to get active. Sessions operate Monday to Friday after school and throughout the day at weekends, making it easy for families to fit fitness into busy schedules. Throughout 2025, 207 hours of junior gym spaces were offered each week and in total over 48,000 junior attendances were recorded.

Junior Gym is designed specifically for young people, typically aged 11 to 16. It provides supervised gym sessions led by trained fitness staff, age-appropriate equipment and guidance on safe technique and a friendly inclusive environment for young people to build confidence.

Group Exercise

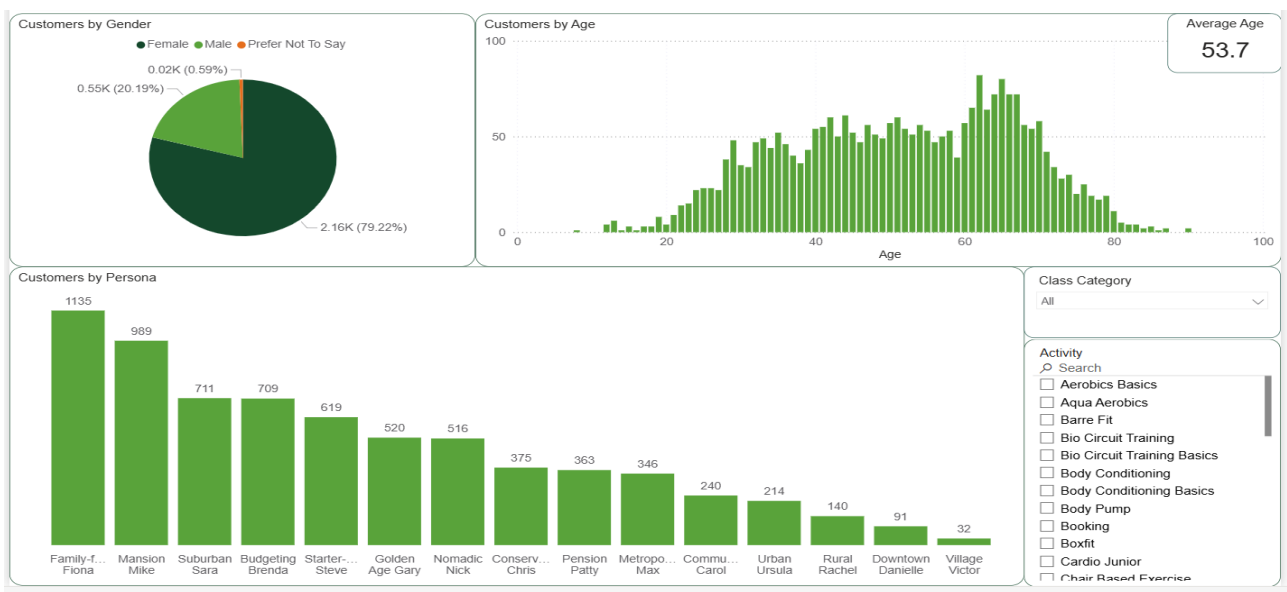
Belfast Group Exercise performs consistently at over 75% utilisation with over 480 classes provided each week in 2025. On average over 5,000 people take part in group exercise across the city each week. In 2025, 23,885 classes were delivered to 269,322 participants.

The weekly number and type of classes is outlined in figure 3 below.



79.2% of group exercise participants are female with 20.2% male. The average age of users is 53.7 years. Older demographics highlight the variety of activities available across the city with older participants participating in activities such as aqua aerobics, yoga, Pilates and basic classes. Figure 4 which follows provides greater insight into customer demographics.

*Figure 4: Belfast Group Exercise Demographics*



Swimming Pool Usage

GLL’s pool programme spans ten leisure centres across the city, delivering one of Belfast’s most comprehensive and inclusive aquatic offerings. Public swimmers can choose from Swim for Fitness lane sessions, Swim for All sessions designed for every age and ability, and a wide range of leisure water activities including inflatables, floats, family swims and waterslide sessions. Alongside this, the programme integrates swimming lessons, school swimming, club training, water polo including competitions and events and a growing timetable of water-based exercise classes and health initiatives.

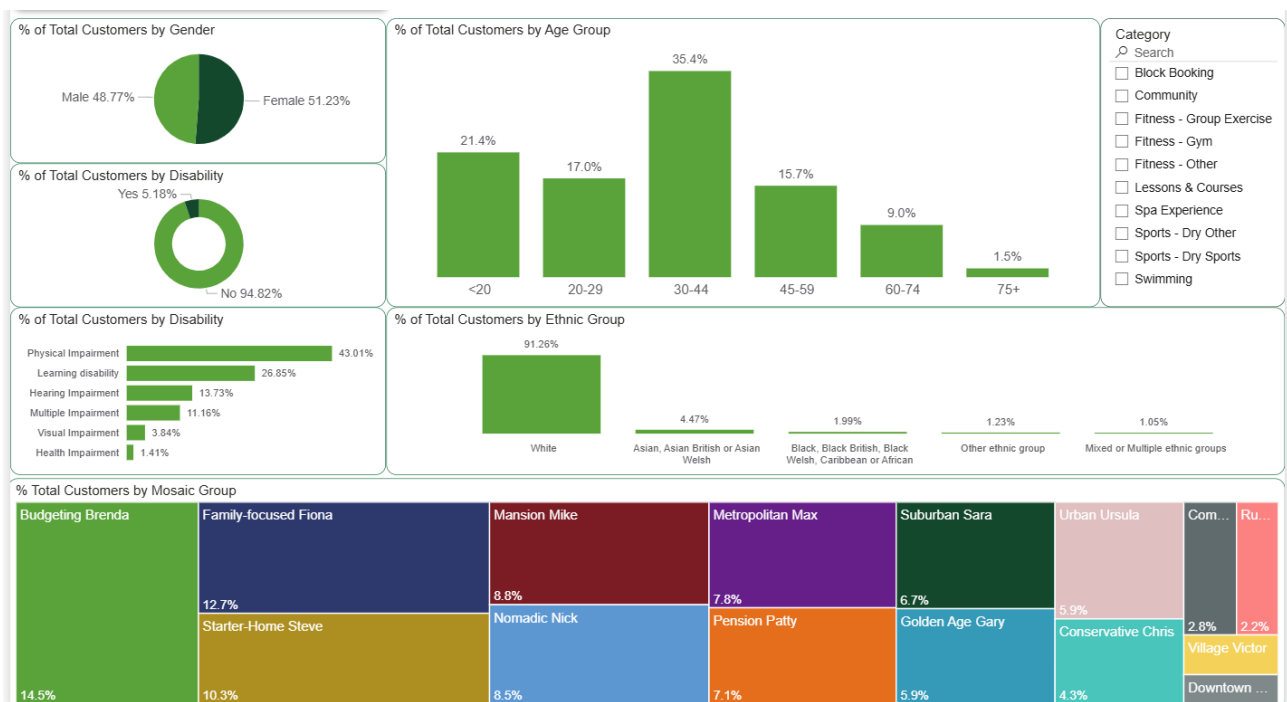
This balanced approach ensures that community access and aquatic development go hand in hand, fully aligning with the Belfast Aquatics Strategy, which guarantees public swimming opportunities throughout all opening hours each week. The scale of engagement speaks for itself with more than 483,903 people taking part in swimming activity in 2025, highlighting the vital role these pools play in supporting health, confidence and water safety across the city. The greatest usage is achieved in July, August, September and October with almost 200,000 visits taking place during this time. On average 15,000 Swim for All sessions are delivered each month in Belfast.

Further explanation of specific swimming programmes will be outlined within this annual report.

Total Usage

In 2025, GLL recorded a total usage of 3,352,747 across the 16 centres in Belfast. This usage is made up from 48.8% male and 51.2% female. The largest usage group is 30-44 with 35.4% followed by 21.4% for under 20 year olds. The over 60s age group made up 10.5% of all usage. 5.2% of users declared a disability. Further explanation of user demographics can be found in Figure 5 which follows.

Figure 5: Belfast Leisure Usage Customer Demographics 2025

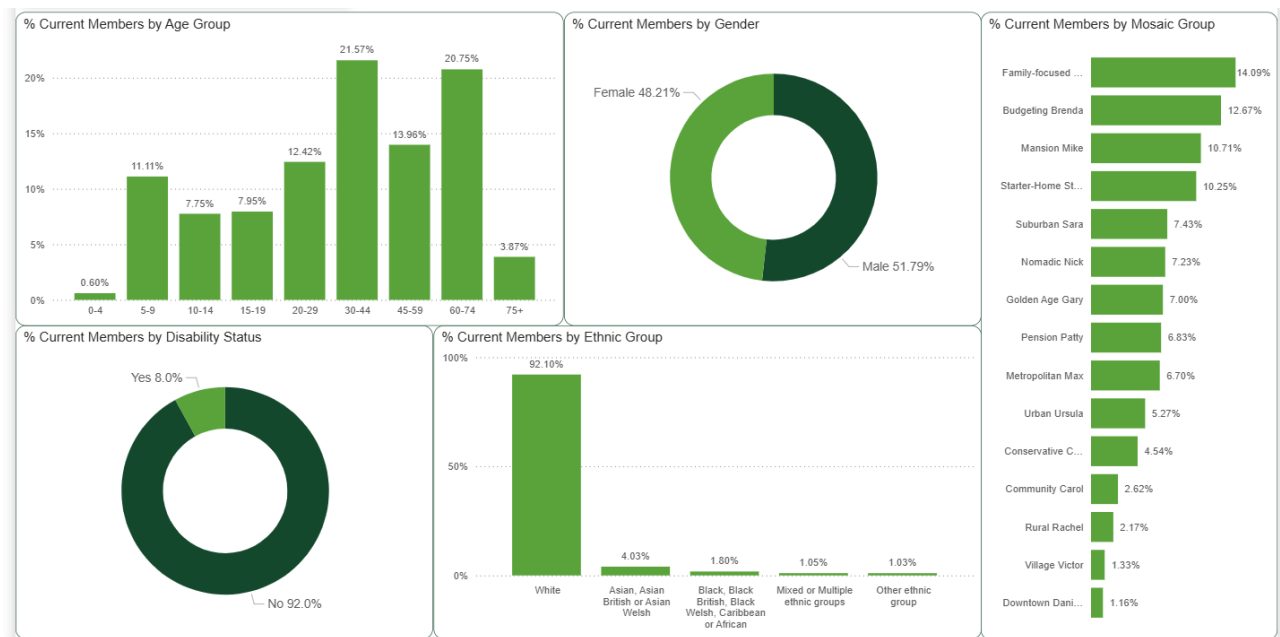




## Health and Fitness Memberships

Total memberships reflects 48.2% female and 51.8% male. The largest membership age group is the 30-44 year olds (21.6%) followed closely by 60-74 year olds (20.8%). 5-9 year olds represents are large proportion of the membership base at 11.1% and this will be made up of children involved in lesson and courses programmes. 8% of the Belfast total membership has a disability and ethnicity follows a similar representation of the Belfast population with 92.1% white. Further details of the membership demographics can be found in figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Belfast Membership Demographics



In January 2025 total memberships sat at 39,152 and at the end of the year this figure was 38,850. With a reduction of 1,320 memberships from November to December. Total memberships (includes prepaid, pay as you go and lessons and courses memberships) reached a peak of 40,879 in September.

In January 2025 prepaid memberships sat at 23,578 and at the end of the year this figure was 22,605 with a reduction of 1,101 memberships from November to December which has been witnessed in previous years. Prepaid memberships reached a peak of 24,336 in September.

## Marketing and Communications

GLL currently operates 23 social media channels with a total of 67.8K followers. Facebook continued to be the largest supported channel with 16 centres using the platform and servicing 52.9K followers. Throughout the course of the year there have been 7.32 million impressions on Facebook and a daily reach of 12K. Instagram is utilised by 6 centres with 11.5K followers and X is used by 1 centre with 3.4K followers. GLL have decided to move away from X going forward.

Social media plays a vital role in how GLL connects with communities, promotes its services and celebrates the impact of its leisure centres across the city. Together, these channels form a powerful communication network that helps drive participation, build community trust and keep members informed, inspired and connected to their local leisure services. Figure 8 below is the top reaching post on Instagram in 2025 with 9.7K engagements.

Figure 8: Top Performing Instagram Post



GLL amplifies its customer message in integrated advertising campaigns using paid social advertising, outdoor, radio and local press titles. Campaigns such as ‘More Ways to Move’ (adult health and fitness), ‘More Ways to Play’ (children and family activities) and products specific campaigns (such as holiday schemes and lessons and courses) are designed to encourage engagement with the Better brand and promote the benefits of health and wellbeing for all communities in Belfast. Some examples of these campaigns can be found below.



Images 5 to 7: GLL Customer Messaging

## Annual User Survey

The online survey is delivered by the in house GLL Customer Relationship Management Team and was sent to all contactable active members via both email and push notifications. In addition, a QR code was promoted in the centres for members to access the survey via their mobile devices. The online survey was conducted between 2nd June and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (43 days). Across all GLL managed UK sites, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre received the highest number of responses (730). Total number of responses for Belfast was 3,053 which was up by 2.3% compared to 2024.

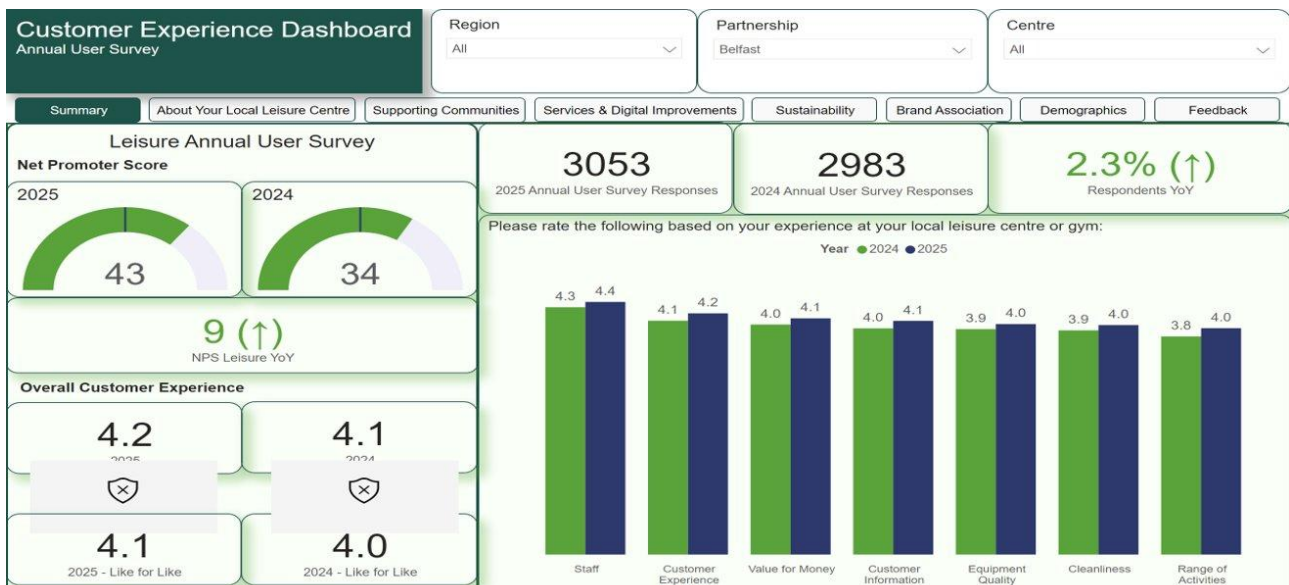
The comprehensive survey questionnaire provided data on respondent demographics and their level of satisfaction with a wide range of facility and service measures. The questionnaire comprised a total of 39 questions in three sections. Section 1, questions about the customer’s local centre. Section 2, questions about supporting health and wellbeing of the customer’s community. Section 3, questions relating to respondent demographics.

Net Promoter Scores (NPS) is a measure of how likely a customer is to recommend the service to others. All centres received registered feedback with scores 0-30 rated as good, 30-70 rated as great and 70-100 rated as excellent. Results can be viewed in table 1 below. 7 centres returned a good rating and 9 returned a great rating.

To continue to improve on this excellent performance there will be an ongoing focus throughout 2026 on staff training, service improvement, enhancing the range of activities and equipment upgrades.

The annual user survey is designed to be an integral part of the centre continuous improvement plans. In pursuit of the key contract objective of a ‘5 star service at 3 star prices’ it is important that the data collected through the AUS is both robust and relevant. The results should be accepted as providing evidence of opportunities for improvement in service and customer communications.

Figure 9: AUS 2025 Results



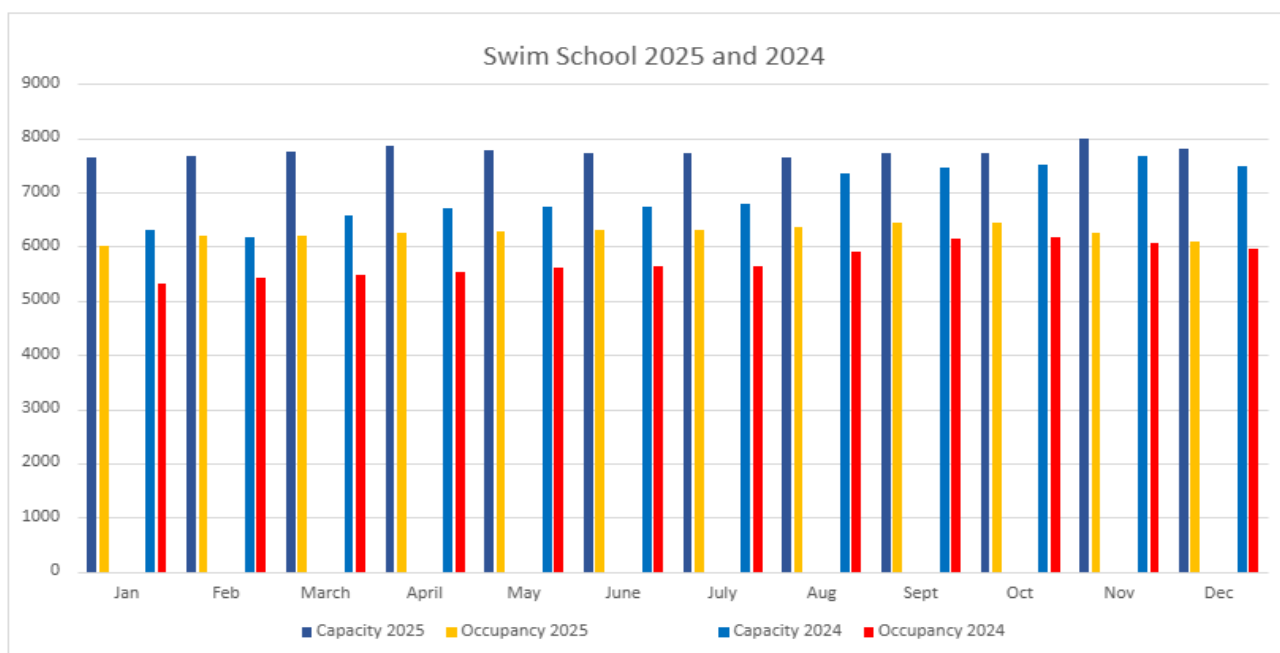
## Better Swim School (including Swimbies)

From January to December 2025, 10 centres delivered Swim School lessons for participants aged 6 months to adulthood. Our qualified teachers delivered the following number and type of classes throughout 2025:

- Swimbies (33 weekly classes)
- Foundation (223 weekly classes)
- Development (127 weekly classes)
- Academy (22 weekly classes)
- Adults (17 weekly classes)

At the beginning of 2025 there were 6,000 pupils enrolled in Belfast Better Swim School. The year concluded with 6,090 which equates to a growth of 90 participants. The graph below highlights the progress made throughout the year.

Figure 10: Swim School monthly comparison of capacity and occupancy from 2024 to 2025



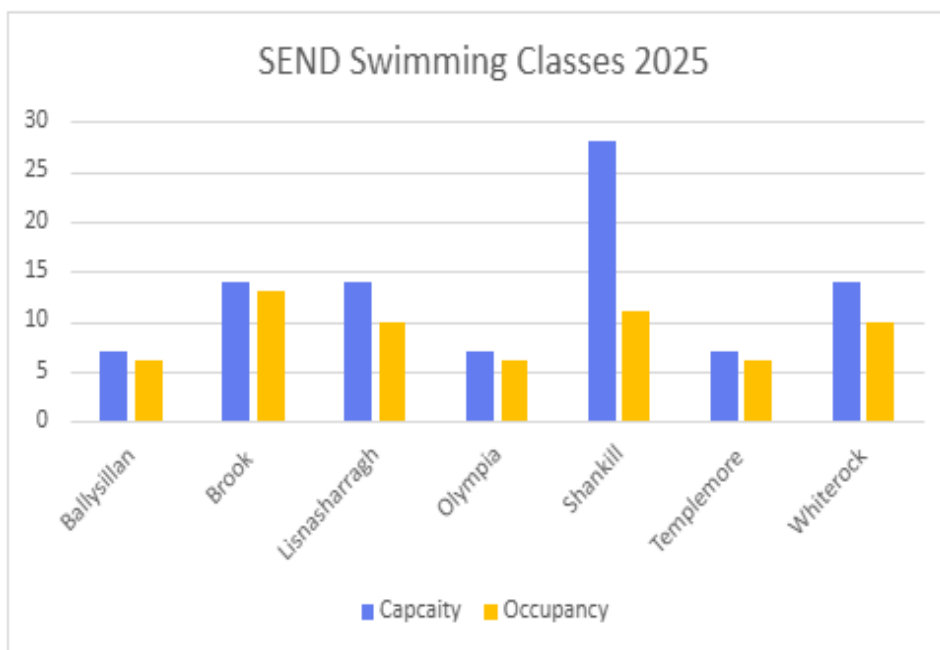
The highest capacity in 2025 was 8,005 which occurred in the month of November, this was an increase of 332 compared to 2024's highest capacity (7,673). There was also notable difference in the occupancy between 2025 (6,436) and 2024 (6,180) with 2025 having a greater amount by 256.

Plans for growth during 2026 will focus on retention of swimmers attending lessons and the recruitment of swim teachers to grow to 6,500 pupils enrolled.

## SEND Swimming Lessons

2025 saw the launch of GLL’s SEND swimming lessons. These lessons were made available across 7 of the centres in Belfast. (Ballysillan, Brook, Lisnasharragh, Olympia, Shankill, Templemore and Whiterock). In total 62 participants were enrolled in the programme and it is envisaged this will further increase in 2026.

Figure 11: SEND Swimming Lesson capacity and occupancy for 2025



SEND lessons cover pupils who have learning difficulties, disabilities, and conditions (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia, or autism) that make it harder to learn than peers of the same age in a small group environment so the teacher can focus on each pupils needs.

While we promote our swimming lessons as all-inclusive GLL believe in delivering this product allows the pupil to learn in a smaller class size with the aim of integrating them into our main lessons plus GLL to the lead in Belfast to promote and deliver SEND swimming from Disability Sport Northern Ireland’s All Equal, Active Campaign in delivering this type activity.

Growth plans for 2026 are Andersonstown, Grove and Falls will be added to deliver SEND swimming lessons plus have additional classes added to the 7 centres who are currently delivering lessons when more swimming teachers gain the qualification. Target for 2026 will be 96 participants included in the programme.

## **Tom Daley Diving Academy**

The Tom Daley Diving Academy programme has remained stable throughout 2025 with more participants moving from the through the Foundation, Beginner and Improver levels. In total 55 participants participated in the programme throughout 2025. The coaching team were also joined by a new Level 1 coach Jess, who has jumped into her role coaching the Foundation/Beginner classes each week.

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 we hosted our first Improver level interclass competition in Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre. All 17 divers that attend weekly diving lessons at the Improver level were invited and 14 took part. With seating arranged on poolside for parents to spectate it provided a great positive atmosphere for the 90 minutes.

Each diver performed five dives which were scored by two judges giving a total score out of 10. This encouraged divers to look at their ability and select dives that they were confident in while also pushing themselves to include a hurdle step or arm swing were possible. The results were then separated into three separate age groups for medal presentation as would be in a standard novice competition. This allowed for three divers to receive a gold, three to receive a silver and everyone else received a bronze for participation.

Plans for 2026 are to expand the programme by including an additional day and creating opportunities for 75 participants.



*Images 8 & 9: Judges scoring at Interclass Competition and the Belfast Diving team with Damian Ball (Swim Ireland Discipline Development Manager)*

## Better Swim School Gala

The 2025 Better Annual Swim School Gala took place at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October. All 10 centres from across the city attended and the event was supported and delivered by Lead Swim teachers, Swim teachers and Community Sport staff.

A packed gallery watched and cheered on all the swimmers participating. In total 117 children participated in the event from 10 centres.

The Gala featured 2 races, 25m Frontcrawl and 25m Backcrawl individual for boys and girls aged 7-16 years old who attend our Development Gold and Academy classes. We also added Mixed Frontcrawl relay races over 50m which brought the event to a close.

This year saw the inclusion of two swimmers with disabilities competing. One with cerebral palsy and one amputee below the knee. As part of Belfast's support of the All Equal, All Active campaign this attendance plus the work on delivering SEND Swimming Lessons across the city is having a positive impact against this important agenda.

All participants who participated received a medal and certificate plus points were up for grabs to win the Belfast Better Swim Cup. Lisnasharragh Swim School completed the hattrick in winning the cup for 2025 completing three years in a row.



Images 10 to 13: Images from the Better Swim School Gala at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre

## Swim Teacher Development

*Table 1: STA Swim Teacher Courses at Lisnasharragh in 2025*

<b>STA Swim Teacher Courses at Lisnasharragh</b>	
Level 2 Award Course	22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan - 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2025. 12 enrolled. 6 internal and 6 external
Level 2 Certificate Course	24 <sup>th</sup> Mar - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr 2025. 12 enrolled. 5 internal and 7 external
Level 2 Award Course	25 <sup>th</sup> Jun - 4 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2025. 12 enrolled. 6 internal and 6 external
Level 2 Award Course	10 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2025 12 enrolled. 4 internal and 8 external
Level 2 Disability Swim Teachers Course	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2025 4 internal enrolled

The above courses are delivered by highly skilled tutors in conjunction with GLL Learning and Development in providing us with new skilled swim teachers in upskilling internal staff so there is sufficient cover in not cancelling lessons and to expand Swim School across our 10 centres.

In addition, GLL is active in recruiting external learners who enrol on swim teacher courses to work for us.

During 2025 the Community Sports Manager Patrick Webb delivered quarter Lead and Swim teacher training covering the 4 main strokes Frontcrawl, Backcrawl, Breaststroke and Butterfly ensuring they are trained in delivering pupils the correct strokes when swimming.

In 2026, GLL will deliver the new Swim Teacher Qualification working with our partner The Swim Teachers Association as the Level 2 Award and Level 2 Certificate have been merged into one qualification.

GLL will continue to recruit Swim teachers so to expand Swim School to provide more spaces in our lessons across the city.

## **Belfast Swimming Club, Triathlon Club, Water Polo Club and Schools Programmes**

### Belfast Swimming & Triathlon Clubs

As part of the Belfast City Council Aquatics Strategy, GLL support the following Swimming clubs and Triathlon Clubs with pool provision across the city to train and host Ulster PTL and Aqua Sprint Galas.

- Alliance Swimming Club
- Leander Swimming Club
- Olympia Swimming and Lifesaving club
- Swim Belfast
- Templemore Triathlon Club
- Olympian Triathlon Club
- Invictus Triathlon Club

### Belfast Water Polo Clubs

In addition, the following Water Polo clubs are supported with pool provision to train from Mini Polo (aged 5-11 years old) up to senior level for male & female members within the clubs.

- Cathal Brugha Water Polo Club
- Clonard Water Polo Club
- Donegal Diamonds Water Polo Club
- Cu Chulainn Water Polo Club

### National Competitions

In addition to the above clubs using pools to train and compete, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre has hosted the following National Competitions during 2025.

- Swim Ulster Short Course (25m)
- Swim Ireland National Under 17 Cup for Boys and Girls
- Swim Ireland National Under 13 Cup for Boys and Girls
- Swim Ireland National Water polo League for male and female.

### Schools Swimming

Throughout 2025, 10 of our centres delivered lessons to over to over 6,000 pupils each month from January to December (excluding July and August summer holidays) across Key Stage 2 (Primary 4-7), and Key Stage 3 (Years 8-10). Belfast has 116 Primary Schools, 34 Post Primary Schools and 13 Special Schools.

Over the past twelve months GLL has delivered school swimming lessons to a total of 96 schools which is made up of 84 Primary, 7 Post Primary and 5 Special Schools.

## Top Team NI Lifeguarding Competition

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 the Belfast Partnership hosted our 9th annual Northern Ireland Lifeguard Championship (Top Team) competition at Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

Observed by Quest Assessor David Constantine, the team at Andersonstown ensured a highly presented centre which welcomed competitors.

- The event was scheduled to compliment Drowning Prevention Week.
- The revised format involved an online team quiz based upon the NPLQ Gen 10 with an expanded wet side scenario and speed swim.
- 10 teams competed in the competition - a total of 40 competitors.
- 8 internal teams represented GLL alongside 2 external teams from Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.
- 50 teenage and primary school casualties were provided from All Saints Secondary School and Bunscoil Phobal Feirste.
- Our thanks to the event organising group of Peter McMonagle, Pat Webb, Roma Doherty, Hugh Boyle and the management team at Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

Overall Results - with prizes awarded by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Tracy Kelly:

1<sup>st</sup> - Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre

2<sup>nd</sup> - Falls Leisure Centre

3<sup>rd</sup> – Templemore Baths

Most valuable Person (new award for best performing competitor) - Darryl Mills, Shankill Leisure Centre.



Images 14 to 17: Images from Northern Ireland Lifeguard Championship at Andersonstown Leisure Centre

## NPLQ Gen 10 Renewals

The National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) stands as the benchmark for excellence in aquatic safety, equipping candidates with the essential skills and confidence needed to protect swimmers and respond effectively in emergencies. Across the city, GLL takes pride in upholding these high standards, ensuring every leisure centre operates with a strong culture of safety, professionalism, and community trust. By offering accessible training pathways and creating new employment opportunities, GLL not only strengthens its lifeguard teams but also empowers people from all backgrounds to build rewarding careers in the leisure industry. In total, 183 GLL lifeguard staff renewed during 2025.

Table 2: NPLQ Gen 10 Recruitment Courses

<b>NPLQ Gen 10 Recruitment Courses</b>	
Templemore Baths	6 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025. 10 enrolled. 4 Internal and 6 External.
Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre	10 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025. 10 enrolled. 3 Internal and 7 External.
Shankill Leisure Centre	23 <sup>rd</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2025. 9 enrolled. 3 Internal and 6 External.
Templemore Baths	25 <sup>th</sup> Jun - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jul 2025. 10 enrolled. 5 Internal and 5 External.
Templemore Baths	16 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2025. 12 enrolled. 2 Internal and 10 External.
Falls Leisure Centre	26 <sup>th</sup> Aug - 4 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2025. 11 enrolled. 5 Internal and 6 External.
Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre	24 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2025. 11 enrolled. 4 Internal and 7 External.
Brook Leisure Centre	15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2025 - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan 2026. 9 enrolled. 3 Internal and 6 External.

All learners passed with centres being sent external candidate contact details to interview and start the onboarding process to become Recreation Attendants across 10 pools.

The above courses are delivered by highly skilled Trainers in conjunction with Royal Lifesaving Society and Learning and Development. This provides GLL with new lifeguards to ensure that there is sufficient staff for our centres to operate in a safe environment across Belfast.

In addition to the courses, all wet centres deliver Lifeguard Monthly and Quarter training to test a lifeguard's skills and speed if they have to deal with a situation within their centre and to build up training hours to renew their qualification every two years.

## RISE Gymnastics Programmes

In 2025 Falls Leisure Centre started their RISE Gymnastics programme offering two classes (Explore and Explore Plus) on Friday afternoons. Two weeks of taster sessions were delivered by the centres during the February Half Term, costing £1 per session and this led into the weekly classes starting on 21<sup>st</sup> February. There were 20 children booked to experience gymnastics across the 4 taster sessions and 20% of these started a monthly direct debit for the weekly classes. Adding these classes in Falls Leisure Centre brought the total number of centres delivering the RISE gymnastics programme in Belfast up to five.

This year GLL further expanded our delivery of the RISE Gymnastics programme by adding two Excel classes to the weekly delivery in Belvoir Activity Centre which started in September. These classes are currently being kept as invite only due to the demand and have been split into Junior and Senior for those under or over 8 years old respectively. In total 263 participants enrolled on the programme across the five sites.

Figure 12 & 13: Belvoir Activity Centre & Brook Leisure Centre capacity and occupancy results for 2025

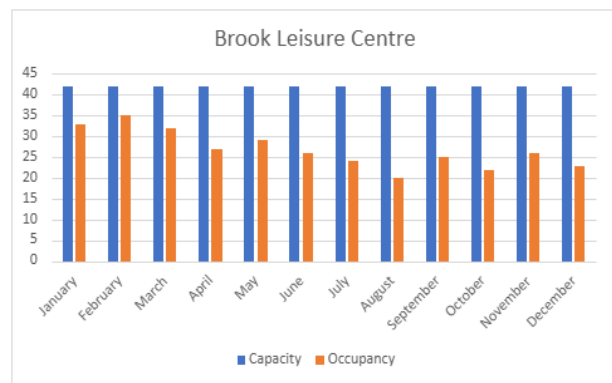
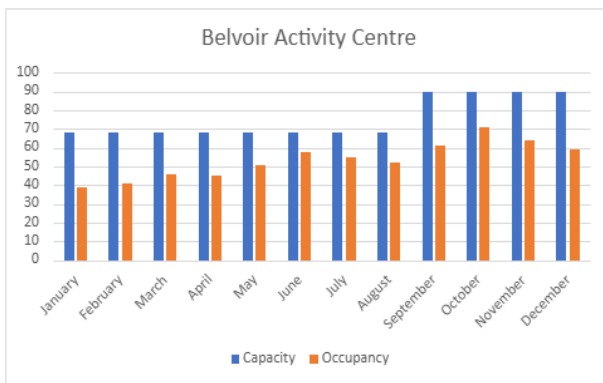


Figure 14 & 15: Falls Leisure Centre & Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre capacity and occupancy results for 2025

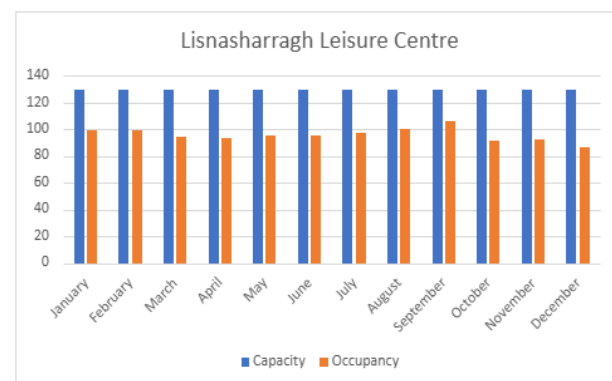
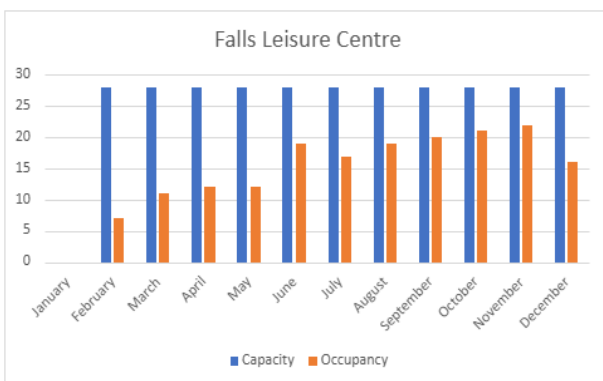
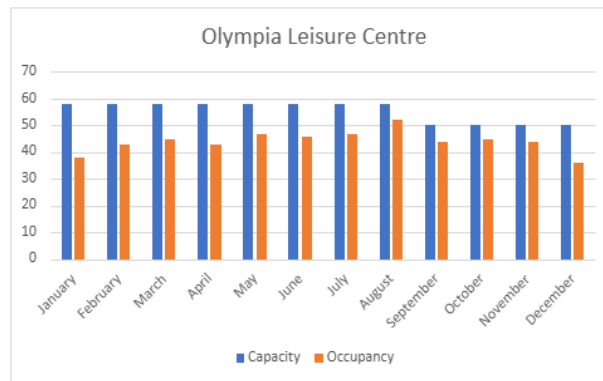


Figure 16: Olympia Leisure Centre capacity and occupancy results for 2025



On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March, GLL held our second RISE Gymnastics Competition in Belfast, hosted by Olympia Leisure Centre. One hundred gymnasts signed up to take part from our weekly classes in Belvoir Activity Centre, Brook Leisure Centre, Falls Leisure Centre, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, and Olympia Leisure Centre. On the day we had 88 compete which is 50% more than the competition held in 2024.

Competitors had a choice to compete in three different strands: Core Skills (Level 1, 2, or 3) this was a floor routine which they were given depending on their ability and learnt in their class, Small Apparatus (Ribbon, Hoop, or Ball), and Large Apparatus (Bench or Vault). Every child left the competition with a certificate and a medal, those who scored a gold overall also received a British Gymnastics RISE leotard. This was a great event, and all the gymnasts enjoyed it giving them a goal to work towards during the weekly classes and served as a positive retention tool.



Images 18 to 22: Images from the RISE Gymnastics Competition at Olympia Leisure Centre

GLL rounded off the year by inviting parents into our last weekly lessons before the Christmas break. The classes either showcased a routine that they had been working on for the weeks leading up to this or a range of skills they had been practicing on the different pieces of apparatus.

Looking ahead to 2026, there are plans to further grow the RISE Gymnastics programme across Belfast to cater for 300 participants. This includes the introduction of Saturday lessons at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, aimed at increasing accessibility for families who are unable to attend weekday sessions. In addition, we plan to expand the current equipment offering within existing classes, allowing for greater variety in session delivery and the capacity to accommodate more participants. These developments will support continued growth, enhance participant experience, and help attract and retain new gymnasts across the programme.

## Climbing Programmes (including Adapted Climbing)

This year GLL streamlined our booking process for climbing from September to reflect the blocks that it was being delivered in. This meant that all participants started on week 1 together and the instructor was able to plan the 6-week block to suit the group, as there would not be any participants joining or leaving mid-block. 2025 saw 225 juniors and 139 adults taking part across the 6 blocks of weekly lessons gaining more knowledge and skills in the sport.

Over the summer months we delivered a 6-week Adult Beginner Introduction to climbing which had 100% occupancy and has proved to be a success with plans to deliver more of these courses in the summer of 2026. In September 2025, The Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex held four sessions over two days of grassroots climbing open days with Mountaineering Ireland. These days were open to all youth climbers in Northern Ireland that are part of a club, academy, squad or team. There was also a further two open days with climbing taster sessions open to the public to increase participation and awareness of the sport.



Image 23: Adult Climber & GSF Athlete  
Lucy Mitchell



Images 24 to 29: Adaptive Climbing  
Programme in Ozone

As part of our response to the All Equal, All Active campaign, and to increase inclusive participation opportunities, three-week adapted climbing courses were delivered throughout October and November for people with disabilities. These courses were delivered at The Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex in partnership with Mountaineering Ireland. After running taster sessions in the summer of 2024, it became apparent that people were more interested in taking part in a course that provided progressive learning opportunities and a chance to get to know others taking part, including the coaches. This feedback led to the delivery of two short courses, and they were a success with 11 spaces booked across the blocks, and 2 of the participants returning as repeat bookers for the second course.

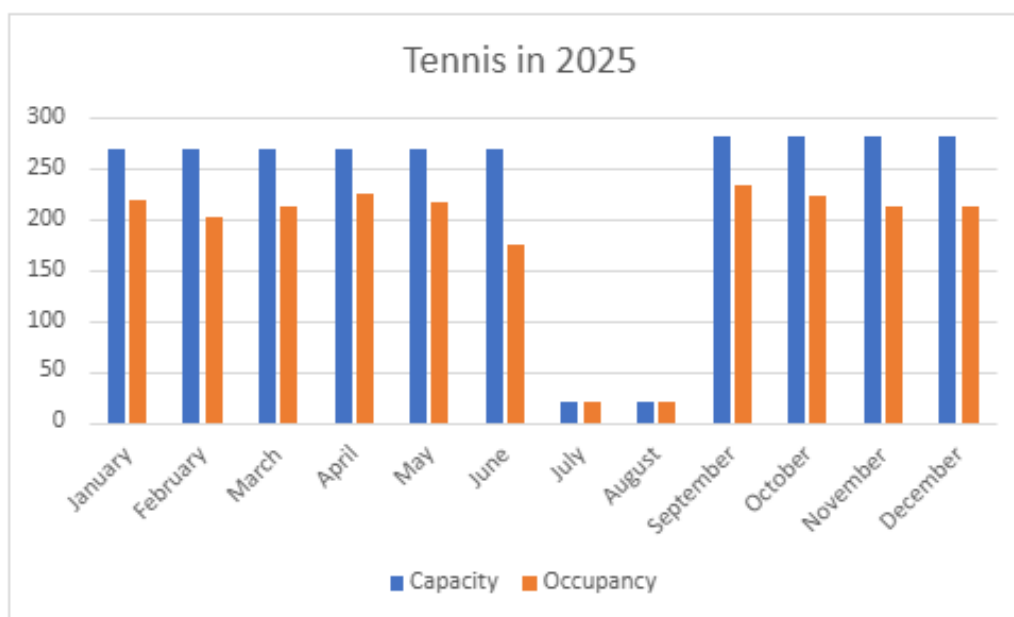
In 2026, we will continue to drive inclusive participation across our programmes by building on the success of adapted and beginner pathways. Plans include the further delivery of adapted climbing courses, expanded inclusive taster opportunities, and continued partnership working to reduce barriers to participation. These actions will ensure a welcoming, supportive environment for people of all abilities and backgrounds, while creating clear progression routes into regular participation.

## Tennis Programmes

The tennis programme delivered at The Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex provides weekly coaching opportunities for both junior and adult participants. Each week, 24 junior lessons are delivered for children and young people aged 3–16, alongside 17 adult lessons structured by ability level (beginner, improver, and advanced). In 2025, over 230 participants engaged in these weekly lessons, developing their skills, confidence, and understanding of the game. In March 2025, the centres hosted Ulster Tennis U14 and U16 closed match play events, while Ozone also delivered its Annual Charity Tennis Tournament in December.

During the summer period, four adult beginner short courses were added to the programme and delivered around centre opening hours. Fourteen participants attended the seven-week courses, with a further six participants attending a five-week course. These courses were designed as entry-level opportunities and provided clear progression routes, with participants signposted into the regular weekly tennis lesson programme in September. In October, Ozone also introduced a monthly social tennis session, offering participants the opportunity to play in a relaxed and inclusive environment. Attendance at these sessions has grown steadily, and further development is planned into 2026.

Figure 17: Tennis Programme capacity and occupancy in 2025



As part of our All Equal, All Active campaign, inclusive tennis provision continues to be a key focus. Weekly wheelchair tennis sessions are delivered in partnership with Spokes in Motion, alongside weekly visually impaired tennis sessions delivered in partnership with Windsor Tennis Club. In 2025, the programme also supported the delivery of Tennis Ireland’s Wheelchair Tennis Tournament in September and the Visually Impaired Tennis Tournament in April, helping to increase visibility, access, and competitive opportunities for inclusive tennis across Belfast.

In addition, four quarterly tennis product forums were held online throughout 2025, bringing together representatives from GLL, tennis centres, and the LTA. Belfast was represented at these forums by the Community Sports Officer and management from The Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex. This collaborative approach will continue into 2026, with a continued focus on sharing best practice and raising the standard of tennis delivery across the city.



*Images 30 to 32: Junior Tennis participants at Ozone*

Looking ahead to 2026, the tennis programme will continue to develop opportunities that support inclusive and community-led participation. Plans include increasing the availability of social tennis sessions for both juniors and adults, providing more informal, welcoming opportunities for players of all ages and abilities to take part. We will also continue to grow inclusive tennis provision through expanded partnerships, targeted taster sessions, and clear progression routes into regular activity. These developments will help remove barriers to participation, strengthen community connections, and support sustained engagement in tennis across Belfast.

## Social Sport Programme

Throughout the year, the Belfast Pickleball programme continued to grow, delivering five sessions per week with a total weekly capacity of 120 participants. In total, Belfast centres engaged over 3,500 participants in coached Pickleball sessions, with utilisation of available capacity consistently exceeding 70%.

As part of the wider Belfast Racquets programme, Pickleball has driven a notable increase in sports hall bookings, surpassing participation levels in traditional racquet sports such as badminton and table tennis. In response to sustained demand, all Belfast centres capable of accommodating Pickleball now offer it as a standard booking option and have invested in the necessary equipment. Over the year, just under 3,000 courts were utilised for Pickleball activity.



*Image 33: Pickleball Tournament winners with Community Sport Student Coaches*

GLL Belfast Community Sport also delivered two Pickleball tournaments during the February Half Term and Easter periods, each attracting more than 40 participants. Building on strong participation and growing demand, the Belfast team plans to further expand the Pickleball programme in 2026.

## Coach Education

### Gymnastics

Throughout 2025, five coaches gained their Gymnastics Activity Instructor (GAI) qualification. This course was delivered over four days in September, at Belvoir Activity Centre in partnership with British Gymnastics. Looking ahead to 2026, British Gymnastics will be introducing a new coach education pathway, which we aim to deliver in September to support new coaches in becoming qualified and contributing to the continued growth of our programme across the city.

In addition, two of our current Gymnastics Activity Instructor coaches began their General Gymnastics Level 2 qualification through funding provided to GLL by British Gymnastics. The course commenced in August at Salto, Lisburn, with both coaches due to complete their final assessments in April 2026.

In November, British Gymnastics also delivered a neurodiversity webinar, which two of our coaches attended. They subsequently shared their learning with the wider coaching team, helping to strengthen our understanding of inclusive practice and ensuring our programme provides a welcoming and supportive environment for every child.

### Fencing

In partnership with Northern Ireland Fencing, we delivered a Level 1 Coaching Course in Plastic Foil Fencing at Girdwood Community Hub. As a result, four coaches became qualified and are now able to deliver this sport to schools, community groups, and as part of our holiday schemes. In 2026, we aim to explore the introduction of a weekly plastic fencing lesson and course, further expanding access and participation in the sport.



*Image 34: Participants on Fencing Level 1 Coaching Course with Fencing NI's Johnny Davis*

### Diving

This year, one of our Gymnastics coaches upskilled by gaining her Level 1 Diving qualification, delivered by Swim England at the Manchester Aquatics Centre in March. In addition, a current

Level 2 Diving coach further enhanced their expertise in 2025 by completing the Sport Ireland Coach Developer Course in Diving with Swim Ireland. This development will support the growth of the diving workforce, with plans in 2026 to deliver coach education courses across GLL sites with diving facilities.

#### Physical Literacy

Following on from three members of staff gaining their Physical Literacy qualification in 2024, we delivered our first Physical Literacy course to a range of sport coaches across the partnership in March. A second course was then delivered to our Easter Holiday Scheme staff as part of their induction day in April. In total, 23 staff were trained in Physical Literacy. In 2026, we aim to continue delivering this course, offering it to both staff and affiliated clubs and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to further embed physical literacy principles across our programmes.

#### LTA Youth GO!

In 2025, three additional coaches became qualified Activators through the LTA Youth Go! Tennis programme. This qualification enables them to introduce tennis to young children through fun, game-based activities, supporting early engagement and positive first experiences in the sport.

## **GLL Sport Foundation**

In 2025, over £115,000 was invested in Belfast’s 158 athletes through the GLL Sport Foundation, the UK's largest independent athlete support programme. Since its launch in the city in 2015, the Foundation has supported over 1,200 Belfast-based athletes, amounting to more than £700,000 in total funding. Among this year's recipients, 57% are under the age of 21 and 23% are under 16, highlighting the Foundation's strong commitment to youth sport development. Support spans across 38 different sports from Olympic and Paralympic disciplines to Commonwealth Games events.

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, Belfast City Hall played host to a landmark celebration as the GLL Sport Foundation Awards Night honoured the local athletes and marked 10 years of GLL's presence in the city. The evening not only reflected on a decade of transformation in Belfast's leisure sector but also celebrated the city's largest ever intake of supported athletes - the biggest of any of the 78 regions supported across the UK.

The awards night featured an impressive line-up of speakers including Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr Micky Murray, Belfast City Council Chief Executive John Walsh, David Tumilty of the Public Health Agency, and GLL representatives Gareth Kirk, Jacqui Pope, and Tony Wallace. In a special moment, Lady Mary Peters was honoured for her continued partnership with GLL and the GLL Sport Foundation through the Mary Peters Trust, a relationship that has played a vital role in the development of local sporting talent.



*Images 35 to 38: GLL Sport Foundation Awards celebrating 10 years of support in Belfast*

This year GLL hosted our first workshop for our GSF athletes focusing on Sport and Exercise Nutrition. Dr Andrea McNeilly, Senior Lecturer at Ulster University delivered this session in Girdwood Community Hub on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> June. This workshop was designed for both athletes and parents, addressing common nutrition myths and offering practical, evidence-based tips. It also provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions and for us to gather feedback on what future workshop topics would be most beneficial.

## Holiday Scheme Programme

The GLL Holiday Scheme programme in Belfast plays a vital role in providing safe, engaging, and inclusive recreational opportunities for children and young people across the city. Operating during the Easter, Summer and Halloween holiday periods, the programme is designed to support families by offering structured activities that promote physical activity, mental wellbeing and social development, while also ensuring accessibility for children of all abilities.

Over the years, the Holiday Scheme programme has become a key part of GLL’s community engagement in Belfast, offering a diverse range of activities that cater to varied interests and needs of the communities GLL serve. The programme gives children a fun, engaging place to learn new skills, boost their confidence, and make positive social connections—all within a safe and supportive setting.

A central priority of the programme this year was to ensure the highest standards of quality and safety. To achieve this, GLL invested in comprehensive staff training covering essential areas such as child safeguarding, disability inclusion, first aid and multi-sports coaching. Regular compliance checks and quality monitoring throughout the year ensured that these high standards were consistently met across all delivery locations.



*Image 39 & 40: Participants of Ballysillan and Avoniel Holiday Schemes*

The Holiday Scheme programme was delivered across 13 centres citywide, offering a mix of Traditional Holiday Schemes, Disability Camps and Sport-Specific Camps. Activities ranged from arts and crafts, football, dodgeball, table tennis, fencing, basketball and board games, to swimming and bouncy castles where facilities were available. In addition, specialist programmes such as football at Avoniel, gymnastics at Belvoir Activity Centre, and the new Active and Able Camps provided targeted opportunities for children to engage in structured sports and develop specific skills.

This background provides the context for this report, demonstrating the scale, scope, and community impact of the Holiday Scheme programme. The following sections detail the delivery, participation and outcomes of the programme over the past year, highlighting the continued success and value of this initiative for children, families, and the wider Belfast community.

Statistics

In total, the GLL Traditional Holiday Scheme Programme catered for 3,111 children, representing 96.1% occupancy of the available spaces. This reflects an increase of 302 participants compared to 2024 and 836 compared to 2023.

The Sport Specific Schemes welcomed 391 participants across various sports and centres, an increase of 260 from 2024. Across all schemes, 3,501 children participated throughout the year.

Participation by gender remained balanced, with 51% male and 49% female, continuing the near 50/50 split witnessed in previous years (the remaining number did not declare a gender). Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre recorded the highest attendance with 816 participants (99.8% occupancy), followed by Olympia Leisure Centre with 347 (92.3%), and Andersonstown Leisure Centre with 264 (100%). Further detail is provided in table 3 below.

*Table3: GLL Traditional Holiday Scheme Statistics – Age and Gender Breakdown*

Traditional Holiday Scheme - Genders and Age Ranges					
Centre	Male	Female	5-7 Years	8-10 Years	11-14 Years
Andersonstown	118	128	100	161	23
Ballysillan	39	65	43	47	24
Brook	117	121	118	104	31
Falls	100	72	100	92	14
Grove	89	84	54	97	57
Lisnasharragh	330	415	175	426	205
Olympia	156	129	124	130	61
Ozone	101	100	33	112	109
Shankill	110	67	52	84	45
Templemore	112	87	61	109	46
Whiterock	141	89	137	93	24
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,455</b>	<b>639</b>

On Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July, the Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex held a Summer Scheme Celebration Day to recognise the achievements of this year’s programme. The event brought together more than 430 children from 11 centres, making it the largest gathering the event has delivered. Each centre organised groups by age and provided children with colour specific Better t-shirts to help them identify their teams throughout the day.

Activities began with every group being allocated to a sports station located in the indoor tennis courts, on the 3G Multi Sports Pitch, or on the grass pitch. GLL invited a range of National Governing Bodies and local sports clubs to deliver coaching sessions, ensuring a strong mix of

expertise. Children moved between stations in 20-minute intervals, giving them the opportunity to take part in a wide range of sports across the venue.

In total, the event featured 22 stations showcasing 15 sports. Support came from organisations including Belfast Bulls Basketball Club, Athletics NI, NI Fencing, Ulster Rugby and the Northern Cricket Union. Many children were able to try new sports that they had not experienced before, adding to the sense of excitement and discovery throughout the day.

Two GLL Sports Foundation athletes attended to encourage and motivate participants: Aidan Walsh, Olympic bronze medallist in boxing, and climber Lucy Mitchell. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Paul Doherty, also visited the event and spoke about the positive role that sport plays in bringing communities together across the city.

This celebration marked a strong conclusion to the summer schedule and highlighted the range of high-quality activities delivered throughout July and August. It also demonstrated the ongoing commitment of GLL and partners who continue to make the Summer Scheme a valuable experience for young people across Belfast.



*Image 41 to 43: Community Sports Officer, Dempsey Rainey with GSF Athletes Aidan Walsh and Lucy Mitchell. Regional Director, Gareth Kirk and Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Paul Doherty with two participants. A participant taking part in the Athletics NI session.*

## Wider Community Sport Initiatives

All our schemes are designed to be inclusive for everyone, including children with physical and learning disabilities. Historically, our ability to support individuals requiring one-to-one assistance has been limited due to constraints in staff resources, experience, and qualifications. This year, GLL established a partnership with Active Youth NI, a local Community Interest Company specialising in programmes for children and young people with physical and/or learning disabilities.

Through this partnership, GLL delivered our first Active and Able Camps, specifically aimed at children and young people who would typically require one-to-one support. A total of 56 participants attended five camps throughout the year at Avoniel, Belvoir Activity Centre, and Brook Leisure Centre. Feedback from parents and guardians was overwhelmingly positive, praising the attentiveness of the coaches and highlighting the important role these camps play in providing families with respite from their caring responsibilities. Active Youth NI provided the staff and specialist equipment, while our role focused on facilities, logistics, booking, customer enquiries, and production of marketing materials. Building on this success, GLL plan to expand in 2026 to deliver eight camps and support over 100 participants.

In addition to the dedicated camps, our traditional summer schemes welcomed over 200 children with additional needs, including learning and physical disabilities such as ADHD, autism, and wheelchair users. Recognising that staff have previously faced challenges in meeting all needs, GLL delivered Disability Inclusion Training to all holiday scheme staff during our induction day in June. Active Youth NI conducted the training, covering theoretical aspects of disability awareness and terminology, followed by practical demonstrations of sports and activities adapted for children with physical and learning disabilities. This training equipped staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to create a fully inclusive environment across all schemes.



*Images 44 & 45: Participants enjoying the Active and Able Camps at Brook Leisure Centre and Avoniel*

## **Liverpool Football Club Foundation Player Development Programme**

In 2025, GLL launched a new collaboration with the Liverpool Football Club Foundation to deliver a Player Development Programme (PDP) in Belfast. As part of this partnership, GLL runs the PDP from September to June and delivers holiday camps during the Easter, Summer, and Halloween school breaks.

To launch the programme, GLL hosted an open day on 18th August at Avoniel for potential players. Four one-hour sessions were held for the following age groups: 7–9 years, Under 9s, Under 11s, and Under 13s. The open day achieved a near 50/50 split between Catholic and Protestant participants in a traditionally Protestant area of East Belfast, demonstrating the programme’s ability to unite young people across community divides. All sessions were fully booked within five hours, reflecting strong demand.

Upon the full launch of the PDP, 116 children signed up, supported by five UEFA-qualified coaches. At the end of the second block, 106 participants remained enrolled, with a focus on maintaining the quality and standard of the programme.

Following this, GLL delivered the first LFC Foundation Holiday Camp over Halloween, from 29th–31st October, with 21 children participating. The camp acted as a pilot to test delivery methods and identify potential PDP players. Building on this success, GLL plans to deliver at least six holiday camps next year, reaching over 300 children.



*Images 46 & 47: Player Development Programme in action at Avoniel in 2025*

## Active Aging Programmes

GLL Belfast continues to deliver Active Ageing programmes, with three Active Morning sessions held weekly at Brook Leisure Centre, Belvoir Activity Centre and Girdwood Community Hub. These sessions aim to combat social isolation among older adults while promoting an active and healthy lifestyle, attracting approximately 50 participants per week.

Throughout the year, GLL Belfast has been actively represented on Senior Voice Forums and at Active Ageing partnerships, contributing to strategies that support older adults in remaining active.

Belfast's flagship Active Ageing event, the Better Belfast Club Games, took place on Monday 20th October 2025 at Girdwood Community Hub. The event welcomed over 50 participants aged 60 and above from various centres across the city, who took part in a range of sports activities. Team Falls triumphed for the third consecutive year, reclaiming the trophy. The event was widely enjoyed, with overwhelmingly positive feedback, highlighting its success as a celebration of sport, community, and wellbeing for older adults.



Images 48 to 56: Images of 2025 Better Club Games

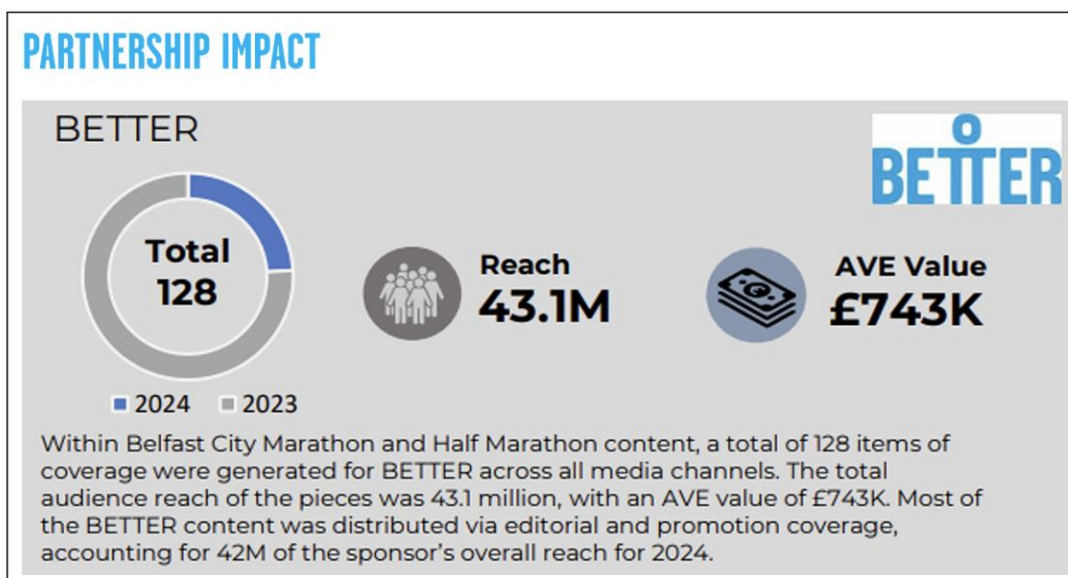
## Belfast Marathon and Half Marathon Programme

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving physical, social, and mental wellbeing, GLL Belfast continues to partner with the Belfast City Marathon, a collaboration that began in 2018. This partnership aligns closely with our mission to promote participation, inclusivity, and healthy lifestyles. Through this collaboration, we provide support across multiple areas, including volunteer training, the ambassador programme, and community outreach activities at the City Marathon, Half Marathon, and Women’s 10k. This engagement enables us to connect with communities across Belfast, encourage participation in mass events, foster volunteering, and make sport and physical activity accessible and enjoyable for all.

In 2025, GLL played a pivotal role in the 26.2 Crew initiative, supporting 12 first-time marathon runners in preparing for the Moy Park Belfast City Marathon. We provided strength and conditioning support, access to citywide gym facilities, and expert guidance on fitness, nutrition, and recovery. The programme proved highly successful, with all 12 participants completing the marathon on 4th May 2025. Their achievements were celebrated at a Prize Giving Ceremony on 23rd May, where each received a commemorative plaque. The initiative demonstrated both the dedication of the participants and GLL’s commitment to supporting individuals in achieving their fitness goals.

Throughout marathon weekend, GLL engaged the public through interactive and fun activities designed to promote health, fitness, and wellbeing. On Saturday 3rd May, a pop-up gym at the International Conference Centre hosted three fitness challenges—the Slam Ball Challenge, Step-Up Challenge, and Squat Hold Challenge—with top male and female participants receiving prizes, including family passes to Andersonstown Aqua Play Park or Templemore Baths. Fitness instructor Jessica Hanna also led two popular 15-minute classes on the Cool FM stage. On race day, Sunday 4th May, blender bikes offered fruit smoothies to runners and spectators, providing a healthy energy boost and encouraging community participation. These activities allowed GLL to connect with the public, showcase our facilities and programmes, and promote the importance of physical activity in an engaging and interactive way.

Figure 18: Better Sponsorship Contract Value with Belfast City Marathon



## Belfast Health Programmes

The Belfast Health Team has delivered targeted physical activity interventions throughout 2025, supporting individuals with a variety of health conditions including chronic conditions via referral pathways and promoting active lifestyles. This report summarises performance, strategic developments, and community impact throughout the year 2025.

### Programme Overview

GLLs Belfast Health Team delivers a range of health referral pathways tailored to specific conditions. The Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) offers a 12-week programme of supervised exercise for individuals referred by healthcare professionals. Cardiac Rehabilitation supports recovery after cardiac events through safe, structured activity. Cancer Prehabilitation and Rehabilitation help patients prepare for and recover from treatment with personalized exercise and support. The Musculoskeletal (MSK) pathway targets joint and mobility issues through land and water-based classes. Pulmonary Rehabilitation assists those with respiratory conditions like COPD or Long Covid. The Neurological Pathway (pilot) provides adapted physical activity for individuals with neurological conditions such as Parkinson’s or stroke.

### Pathways Delivered:

- Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Cancer Prehabilitation/Rehabilitation
- Musculoskeletal (MSK) Support
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Neurological Pathway (pilot)

### Monthly Performance Breakdown

*Table 4: Monthly Completers Activity Summary (Jan-Dec 2025)*

Month	PARS	Cardiac	Cancer	MSK
January	102	4	16	6
February	106	4	12	0
March	41	2	8	0
April	70	2	11	2
May	81	6	10	6
June	71	6	12	0
July	58	4	7	1
August	94	2	26	3
September	63	12	18	7
October	86	10	23	9
November	63	5	12	4
December	54	6	15	3

2025 Totals: PARS: 889 completions, Chronic Conditions: 331 completions

## **Physical Activity Referral Scheme**

### Overview

This section summarises the performance of the Belfast Health PARS programme for, Q4 of the 2024-2025 contractual year (January 2025-March 2025) as well as Q1, Q2 and Q3 of the 2025–2026 contract year all falling in the year of 2025, this summary is based on the submitted Progress Monitoring Reports (PMRs) to commissioners.

### Q4 Overview (Contractual year April 2024- March 2025)

The PARS Level III programme delivered by GLL under Belfast City Council commissioned by the Belfast Health Development Unit (BH DU) continued to exceed expectations in Q4 of the 2024–2025 contract year. The Annual KPI Target is 677 completions. The total completions by Q4 were 1,017.

The contract KPI was fully achieved by Q3, with Q4 completions counted toward overperformance. GLL continued service delivery at risk pending enhancement funding, which was secured. The service enhancement for the Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) addressed 340 additional completers beyond the original contract KPI of 677.

The enhancement funding was secured to cover overperformance, allowing GLL to continue service delivery without disruption. 75% of Q4 completers transitioned to GLL memberships, indicating strong retention and lifestyle change.

### Q1 Overview (Contractual year April 2025-March 2026)

In the first quarter of the 2025–2026 contract year, a total of 241 clients completed the 12-week programme, surpassing the quarterly KPI target of 169 by 72 completions. This strong performance will most likely lead to a request for a service enhancement contract if the trend continues throughout the year.

### Q2 Overview (Contractual year April 2025-March 2026)

A total of 242 clients completed the 12-week programme in Q2. Cumulative completions for Q1 and Q2 were 483. At this stage the programme was progressing well, with completions significantly advancing to surpass annual targets. PARS continues to demonstrate strong performance and will see GLL making a request for overperformance funding yet again.

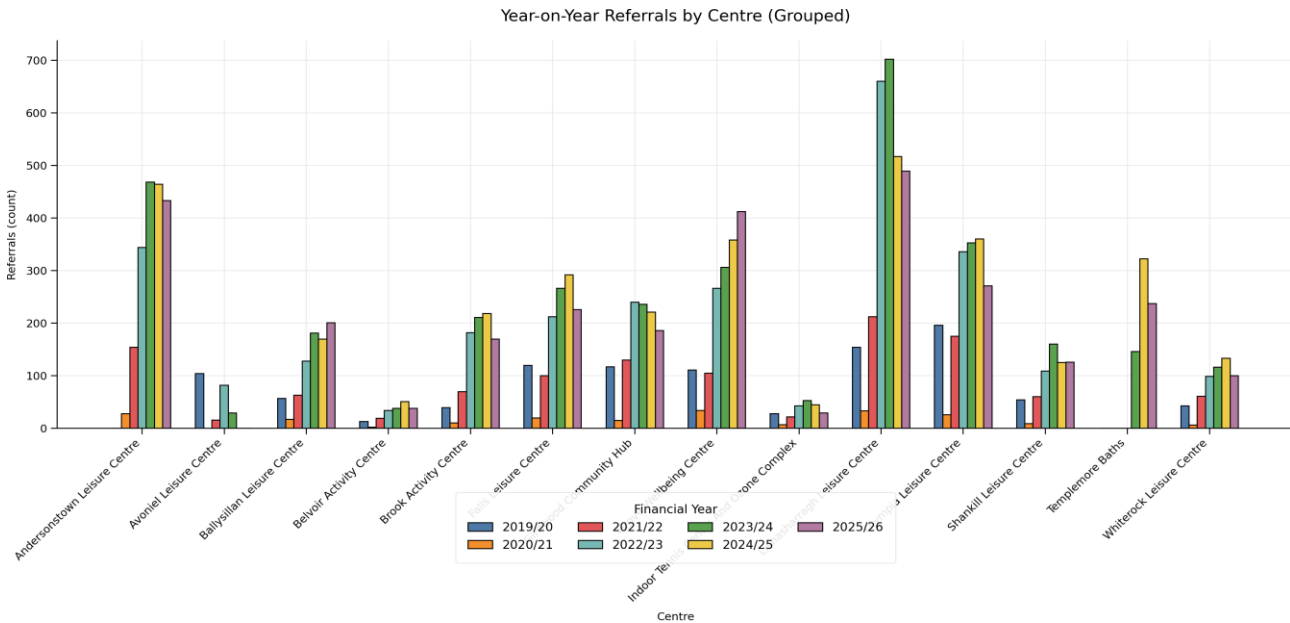
### Q3 Overview (Contractual year April 2025-March 2026)

A total of 220 clients completed the 12-week programme in Q3. Cumulative completions for Q1, Q2 and Q3 totaled 703. At this stage GLL were above the yearly KPI of 677 completions with a quarter of the year left. At this stage GLL had reached the contract limit and were only able to claim 194 of the 220 completers recorded. Any additional completers would be claimed for against the over performance contract. PARS continues to demonstrate strong performance and has seen GLL secure overperformance funding yet again for an additional 330 completers.

The PARS programme continues to grow, both in referrals being received and completers.

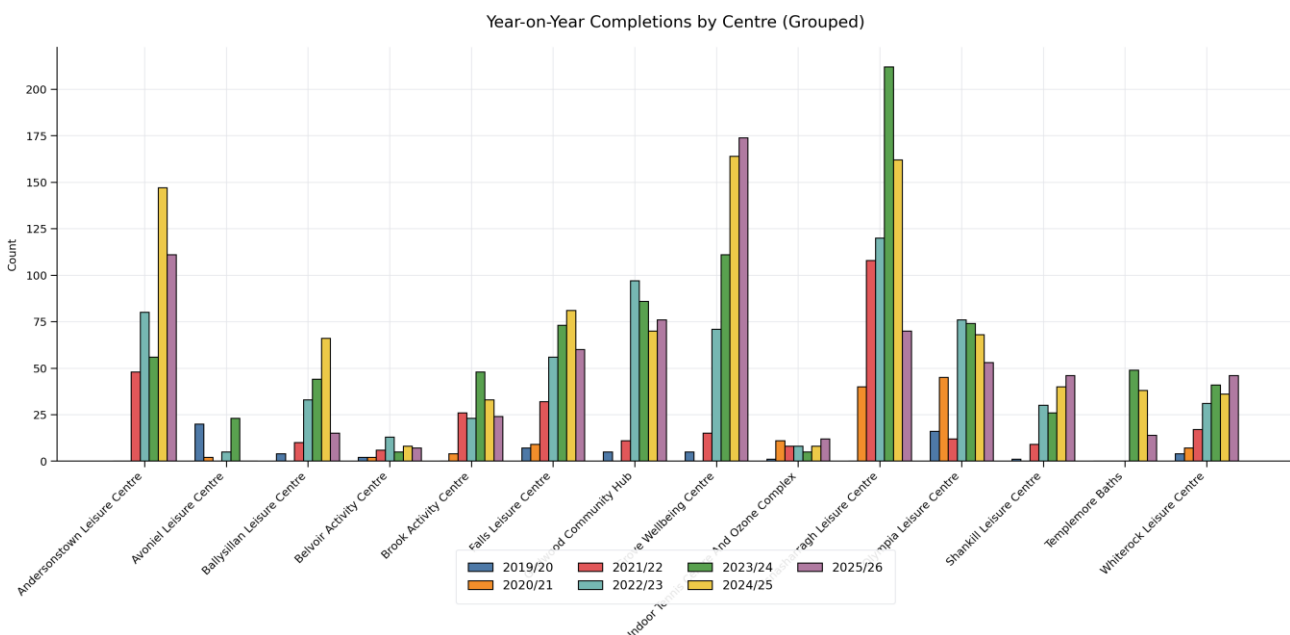
The chart shows year on year referrals received for each centre across the city. It shows strong growth in after COVID-19, rising from 207 in 2020/21 to a peak of 3,776 in 2023/24. There’s a slight drop in 2024/25. Different centers contribute varying amounts each year.

Figure 19: PARS Year on Year Referrals by Centre



The grouped bar chart compares each centre’s completion and no-finish counts across all years, placing the years side-by-side for easy comparison. It highlights how activity has changed year-on-year at each location—showing clearly which centres have grown (like Lisnasharragh, Grove, and Olympia) and which have smaller or more stable numbers.

Figure 20: PARS Year on Year Completions by Centre



## Chronic Conditions

### Overview

This section summarises the financial performance of the Belfast Health Chronic Conditions Programmes for, Q4 of the 2024-2025 contractual year (January 2025-March 2025) as well as Q1, Q2 and Q3 of the 2025-2026 contract year all falling in the year of 2025, this summary is based on the submitted Progress Monitoring Reports (PMRs) to commissioners.

### Q4 Overview (Contractual year April 2024- March 2025)

The Chronic Conditions programmes delivered by GLL under Belfast City Council commissioned by the Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU) continued with a steady in Q4 of the 2024-2025 contract year. The annual KPI completions target was as follows. Cardiac- 116, MSK -140, Cancer prehab 25, Cancer rehab-170. GLL achieved the following. Cardiac- 107, MSK -136, Cancer prehab 35, Cancer rehab-155

Overall, Q4 completions show strong performance across most pathways, however, there was a small underperformance. To address this, GLL are working closely with BHDU and rebranding the cancer pathway, supported by new advertising campaigns aimed at boosting cancer referrals. Additionally, GLL are actively participating in the cardiac rehab steering group to strengthen clinical-to-community referral transitions and increase uptake. While MSK completions are near target, GLL are disappointed by the referral-to-completion ratio and will conduct strategic research to identify barriers and improve conversion rates for this pathway.



*Images 57 & 58: Coach Carlos with programme participant and participant being active in Grove Wellbeing Centre*

### Q1 Overview (Contractual year April 2025-March 2026)

In the first quarter of the 2025-2026 contract year, a total of 97 clients completed the chronic conditions 12-week programmes, this WAS a strong start to the contract year. The Annual KPI Completions Target for the following programmes: Cardiac- 116, MSK -140, Cancer prehab-35, Cancer rehab-160. Completions in Q1 were as follows. Cardiac- 39, MSK -20, Cancer prehab 6, Cancer rehab-38.

Q1 performance highlighted strong progress in Cardiac and Cancer with both pathway completions at 39. This was an overperformance on the quarterly targets of 29 and 35. MSK and Cancer prehab were behind target. At this stage overall, delivery was on track for Cardiac and Cancer rehab but required focused improvement in MSK and Cancer prehab to meet annual KPIs.

**Q2 Overview (Contractual year April 2025-March 2026)**

A total of 99 clients completed the 12-week programme in Q2. Completions in Q2 were as follows. Cardiac- 39, MSK –17, Cancer prehab 4, Cancer rehab-39. In Q2, the programme performance reflected strong engagement across multiple pathways. However, the underperformance highlighted a continued need to review engagement strategies and referral pathways to ensure budget alignment and improved uptake in future quarters.

**Q3 Overview (Contractual year April 2025-March 2026)**

A total of 93 clients completed the 12-week programme in Q2. Completions in Q2 were as follows. Cardiac- 24, MSK –16, Cancer prehab 10, Cancer rehab-43. Cumulative completions for Q1, Q2 and Q3 totaled 289. GLL therefore required 162 further completers in Q4 to achieve target but are on course for this to be achieved.

*Table 5: Chronic Conditions Referral and Completers (April 2021 to December 2025)*

	<b>Apr 21 - Mar 22 Referrals</b>	<b>Apr 21 - Mar 22 Completers</b>	<b>Apr 22 - Mar 23 Referrals</b>	<b>Apr 22 - Mar 23 Completers</b>	<b>Apr 23 - Mar 24 Referrals</b>	<b>Apr 23 - Mar 24 Completers</b>	<b>Apr 24 - Mar 25 Referrals</b>	<b>Apr 24 - Mar 25 Completers</b>	<b>Apr 25 - Dec 25 Referrals</b>	<b>Apr 25 - Dec 25 Completers</b>
<b>Cancer Rehab</b>	152	101	176	102	178	167	160	156	137	106
<b>Cancer Prehab</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	35	20	26
<b>Cardiac Rehab</b>	148	54	120	55	171	76	189	107	97	94
<b>Pulmonary Long Covid</b>	21	12	60	33	103	49	71	34	0	0
<b>MSK</b>	0	0	20	14	117	39	452	136	158	83
<b>Neuro</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>311</b>

## **Strategic Partnerships**

The GLL Belfast Health team has developed a robust network of strategic partnerships to enhance the delivery and reach of its health programs. Collaborations with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) support specialized pathways including Cardiac, Cancer, Pulmonary, and Musculoskeletal rehabilitation. The Mae Murray Foundation has been supportive in piloting the Neurological pathway, while Diabetes UK has reached out to establish a relationship with them and their clients through chair-based exercise demonstrations delivered by the Belfast Health team quarterly.

Active Belfast and the Active Ageing Partnership provide valuable support for older adult engagement. Arthritis UK (previously Versus Arthritis) has partnered on the delivery of OAK Knee and Spine programs as a social prescriber, and the Belfast Health Development Unit (BH DU) as the main commissioner for the programs continues to assist with nutrition training, Section 75 data collection, and equipment provision.

- BHSCT (Cardiac, Cancer, Pulmonary, MSK Physio)
- OAK Project
- Mae Murray Foundation (Neurological pilot)
- Diabetes UK (Chair-based demos)
- Active Belfast
- Active Ageing Partnership (over 60s only mainstream sessions)
- Arthritis UK (OAK Knee/Spine)
- BH DU (Nutrition, S75 data, equipment)

## **Other Achievements and Learnings**

### Workforce Development

- Level 3 Exercise for Disabilities: 4 coaches enrolled, 2 completed
- Level 4 Cancer Rehabilitation completed by 1 health coach and Health referral manager
- Level 4 Neurological: Completed by Health Referral Manager, 1 coach to complete December 2025
- Pulmonary Rehab: 1 coach nearing completion
- Nutrition Training: Delivered to 7 coaches
- First Aid & Tiara System Training: Ongoing
- Team Building & Restructure Discussions: In progress

### Tackling Health Inequalities

- Digital S75 data collection via QR codes
- Localized Belfast Health webpage launched
- Community engagement events (Falls Prevention, Club Games)
- Expansion of OAK events city-wide
- Pilot programme neurological rehab

### Key Achievements

- Overperformance in PARS and Cancer pathways
- Neurological Pathway launched
- OAK Spine planning underway
- Chair-based exercise integrated with Diabetes UK
- Participation in Healthier Systems for Healthier Weight

### Challenges & Recommendations

#### Challenges:

- MSK pathway review – delivery model adaptations to enhance participant engagement and reduce dropout
- Data integration delays
- Reducing waiting list timeframes
- Seeking further funding opportunities to grow the health products

#### Recommendations:

- Increase MSK outreach and partnership with Ulster University to research dropout reasons
- Continue digital transformation
- Review and potential restructure of current health team in Belfast
- Increased network opportunities and exploration of potential funding sources

The programme faced several operational challenges during the reporting period. Engagement with the Musculoskeletal (MSK) pathway remained lower than expected, prompting a need for targeted outreach. Additionally, while coach training was ongoing, completion rates varied, highlighting the need for structured support.

To address these issues, it is recommended that GLL increase outreach efforts for the MSK pathway, we aim to do this with the official relationship with Queens University Belfast who will provide opportunities for research projects to investigate these difficulties further. We also need to consider investing further in digital transformation to streamline data processes and enhance coach development through mentoring and structured CPD support.

Looking Ahead to 2026

In 2026, GLL will continue to strengthen and expand its health initiatives as a core part of its commitment to reducing health inequalities. This will include the ongoing rollout of OAK Knee and Spine events, the growth of Pulmonary pathways, deeper integration with BHDU and BHSCT, and the development of new community-based health programmes.



*Images 59 & 60: Oak Event held in Andersonstown and wider Health Programme outreach in Brook Leisure Centre*

## **Client Testimonials**

### **Cardiac**

#### **Clare Cassidy - 17/11/2025**

Did the programme meet your expectations? - Yes

Any other comments - The programme is very enjoyable and brings a sense of belonging to everyone in the group.

How has this programme affected your day-to-day life? - Increase self-confidence/esteem, look better, feel healthier, higher motivation levels, more energy, daily tasks feel easier.

Any other comments - I always feel better and more energized after the session and more motivated to exercise between sessions.

Is there anything we can add to the programme to improve? – No, it's excellent as it is.

Have you any other feedback regarding the programme, your coach(es), the centers? - Carlos expresses care and concern for all participants. He is always fully prepared and always seeks to vary the activities and to make them balanced and interesting. He is very encouraging to us all.

### **Cancer**

#### **William Stevenson - 15/01/2025**

Did the programme meet your expectations? - Yes

Any other comments - I was delighted with the welcome and orientation from Marty and that all abilities were catered for. I felt challenged but not pushed beyond my limits.

How has this programme affected your day-to-day life? - Increase in self-confidence/esteem, higher motivation levels, feel healthier.

Any other comments - Got me back into regular exercise which is great.

Would you recommend this scheme to anyone in a similar situation to yourself? - Yes

Why? - There are no downsides to it. Good people and good healthy exercise.

Is there anything we can add to the programme to improve? - I am very content with the programme as it is.

Have you any other feedback regarding the program, your coach(es),the centres? - Olympia is a good venue in terms of facilities and equipment. Marty has been so encouraging to everyone. I have ticked that I was referred by a social prescriber. Not sure if that is right. I was referred by the Ulster hospital nursing team following surgery there.

**PARS**

**Neelima Drawid - 24/07/2025**

The Healthwise programme, especially having Sean for guidance really gave me the confidence and opened the door to make me more aware of my health and everything involved. I would have been lost without that support – so that reliance and support was fantastic.

**Participant feedback from the Active Belfast Pledge 4 form in relation to PARS L3 and CC L4 delivery at GLL.**

I really believe it has helped with clients who have had life changing experiences or injuries, especially if they are attempting to get back into work.

Excellent coach Carlos motivated everyone in the group regardless of abilities, very positive atmosphere.

Marty- coach has been amazing in facilitating all the group member’s needs.

Nice to be in a class with other people who have experienced similar health issues.

Had some setbacks during my treatment but Marty was very aware and patient with me.

Finished Healthwise with Paul today, just a quick thank you for all his help. I would recommend the programme to anyone struggling with mental health, he helped me through so much, top man 5 star.

My name is Tina I've just finished 12 weeks with Paul at Whiterock LC, just want to thank him for all his help and encouragement. I've lost 18lbs so I can now have my surgery, also left a letter to Dr McKenna telling him all that you have done for me, thank you.

Great for physical, social & emotional health, these classes have played a vital role in my ongoing recovery post treatment.



Images 57 & 58: Health Programme promoted at OAK Event in Andersonstown Leisure Centre and programme participants with coach Paul.

## 2025 Target Achievements

Lessons and Courses		
Area	Target	Progress
Better Swim School	6,000 members	6,174 members
Swimbies	200 members	262 members
Disability Inclusion Swimming	4 centres, 64 participants	7 centres & 62 participants
School Swimming	6,000 pupils from 80 schools	96 Schools – over 6,000 pupils
Tom Daley Diving Academy	50 members	55 members
RISE Gymnastics	250 members from 5 centres	263 from 5 centres
Tennis Programme	150 Junior members / 150 on outreach	154 members / Outreach moved to 2026
Climbing Programme	150 Juniors / 100 Adults (annual target)	154 Juniors / 139 Adults
Football Programme	50 members	116 members
Fencing Programme	20 members / 150 on outreach	Programme launch 2026 / 1,900 on outreach

Outreach Programmes		
Area	Target	Progress
Traditional Holiday Scheme	3,000 participants from Easter, Summer & Halloween	3,111
Sports Specific Holiday Scheme	500 participants from Easter, Summer & Halloween	391
Celebration of Sport Events	4 events with 1 centre hosting each	Open weekends across the City
Drop-in Sport Sessions	6 sessions across the city each week	7 sessions a week
Active Aging Programme	4 sessions across the city each week (4 centres)	3 sessions – Belvoir, Girdwood and Grove
Inclusive Sport & Physical Activity	2 new initiatives delivered with supporting partner	Active & Able – Active Youth NI Adaptive Climbing – Mountaineering Ireland
Inclusive Programming	4 community focus groups and 8 initiatives	<u>Initiatives</u> SEND Swimming Lessons, Swimming Buddies, Active & Able Camps, Adaptive Climbing, SignVideo Tech, JAM Card Programme, Quiet Gym Programme, VI Tennis & Wheelchair Tennis

Grassroots Sport Support		
Area	Target	Progress
Club & Triathlon Swimming	7 clubs, 172 lane hours and 900 participants	Achieved
Water Polo Club Activity	4 clubs, 168 lanes hours and 500 participants	Achieved
Wider Sport	200 clubs and organisations using GLL facilities	Achieved

Performance Programmes		
Area	Target	Progress
GLL Sports Foundation	145 supported athletes	158 athletes
Athlete Support Programme	2 workshops delivered throughout the year	Nutrition workshop with Andrea McNeilly
Athlete Programme Promotion	1 athlete to support Holiday Scheme and 1 L&Cs	Completed
Athlete Community Engagement	4 attendances at Holiday Schemes organised	2 athletes attended Summer Celebration of Sport. 2 Athletes supported Easter and Halloween

Facility Provision	8 Domestic (competition) & 3 International (training)	Northern Ireland Futsal Federation @ Shankill All Ireland Waterpolo @ Lisnasharragh Swim Ulster @ Lisnasharragh NI Fencing @ Shankill SBYL @ Various Pitch Sites Mountaineering Ireland @ Ozone Ulster Badminton @ Lisnasharragh Ulster Tennis @ Ozone  NI Male Futsal @ Shankill NI Female Futsal @ Shankill NI Fencing @ Shankill NI Women Football Training @ Avoniel
Sporting Events	Host a minimum of 10 events	Swim Ulster Events All Ireland Waterpolo NI Futsal League NI Fencing NI Netball Masters Ulster Tennis Wheelchair Tennis VI Tennis Pickleball Competitions Dance Competitions Boxing Competitions MMA Events

Health Programmes		
Area	Target	Progress
Physical Activity Referral Scheme	750 completers (contract Apr to Mar)	1,017
Cancer Pre/Rehab Programme	150 completers (contract Apr to Mar)	190
Cardiac Rehab Programme	116 completers (contract Apr to Mar)	117
Pulmonary / Covid Programme	50 completers	N/A – Change in Programme
MSK Programme	100 completers (contract Apr to Mar)	136
Diabetes Programme	50 completes	N/A – Change in Programme
Strength & Balance Programme	2 classes across the city	Achieved in Girdwood and Andersonstown – further development 2026
Falls Prevention Programme	4 classes across the city	6 classes delivered – Andersonstown, Grove, Avoniel, Girdwood, Olympia and Whiterock
Junior Weight Management	Launch programme with 30 participants	Moved to 2026
Community Physio Programme	2 physios working in a minimum of 1 centre	3 Physios engaged but not secured

Training & Development		
Area	Target	Progress
Swim Teacher Development	6 x Lead Teacher, 20 x Certificate and 30 x Award (FTE)	Staffing Structure Achieved and in addition 16 Award Teachers qualified and 5 Certificate Teacher qualified
Diving Coach Development	2 x Level 1 and 1 x Level 2 (FTE)	1 Level 1 and 1 Level 2
Gymnastics Coach Development	8 x GAI	5 on GAI & 2 on level 2
Other Coach Development	Fencing x 6	5 Coaches
Physical Literacy Training	3 workshops to Holiday Scheme & Sports staff (50)	2 Courses (L&C Staff and Holiday Scheme Staff) – 23
	2 workshops for local club coaches (30)	Moved to 2026
Club and Volunteer Development	Work in partnership with BCC Sports Dev (6 courses)	First Aid in Sport / Safeguarding / Sport Medicine and Nutrition for Female Athletes / Intro to Cycle Coaching / Autism in Sport / Ending Violence against Women and Girls
	Deliver 1 club and volunteer conference	Moved to 2026 FOR City of Sport

Fitness Lead Training	Minimum of 4 workshops throughout the year	Mandatory FLEX CPD training completed and new workshops designed for 2026
Sport Coach Network Database	Minimum of 100 contacts on database	Achieved and expanding in 2026
JAM Card Training	All centres to complete refresher course	Completed
Sign Video Training	All centres to complete refresher course	Completed

<b>Health &amp; Fitness Programmes</b>		
<b>Area</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Gym Provision	1.1M annual attendance	814,883
Pool Provision	375K annual attendance in SFF and SFA	483,903
Group Exercise	420 classes a week – 260K annual attendance	480 classes achieved in July 2025
Basic Classes	40 classes per week across the city	Maximum achieved was 33 per week
Junior Gym	200 weekly sessions across the city	207 Hours per week
Junior Classes	20 weekly classes across the city	Maximum achieved was 14 per week

<b>Business Development</b>		
<b>Area</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Membership Pre-Paid	25,000 members	24,336
Membership Pay and Play	8,500 members (1,000 Juniors)	10,077 members (715 Junior)
Asylum Seeker Membership	1,000 of total figure	677
Improved Facilities & Programmes	£1.1M investment in small projects and R&M	Michael to provide
Inclusive centres	All centres to have AccessAble and Sign Video access	AccessAble – 7 centres, rest in 2026 Sign Video -Completed

## Looking Forward to 2026

Belfast's next stage of leisure development builds on the strong foundation created through earlier investment, using the proven strengths of previous phases. Highlights include the creation of modern facilities, inclusive programmes and deep community partnerships which have supported the delivery of an even more ambitious, accessible and high-impact leisure offer. The upcoming phase offers the chance to deepen community impact, broaden participation, and enhance specialist provision by building on what has worked through accessible design, strong partnerships, and a commitment to improving health and wellbeing across the city.

**Partner of Choice** – What truly distinguishes us is the strength of our partnerships. We bring both the expertise and the dedication needed to support the broader ambitions of those we work alongside. As we move forward, our focus remains firmly on advancing the Belfast Agenda and contributing to the wider health and wellbeing priorities across the city and Northern Ireland. Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to embrace new opportunities that will deepen and enrich these relationships even further.

A more coordinated approach to marketing and communications would significantly increase the visibility and impact of Belfast's leisure offer. There is clear potential to amplify GLL current work in this area by working more closely with Belfast City Council's communications team. Aligning campaigns, sharing insights and coordinating activity across multiple channels would create a more consistent voice, extend reach and ensure that major programmes and new products are promoted with greater clarity and momentum.

**Respecting the Planet** – We are committed to reducing our environmental footprint through practical, meaningful steps. From cutting waste and lowering consumption to working with partners on more efficient heating solutions for our facilities. In close collaboration with Belfast City Council, we will continue to pursue joint initiatives that support our shared sustainability ambitions.

Belfast's leisure estate can only progress if investment in energy-saving infrastructure keeps pace with the wider transformation of the sector. Many centres already benefit from modern, efficient systems, but further gains depend on Belfast City Council and GLL jointly prioritising upgrades that cut consumption, reduce carbon output and lower long-term operating costs. This means funding new energy-saving technologies while also ensuring that existing systems are repaired and maintained quickly when faults occur, as delays lead to unnecessary energy loss and higher running costs. A more coordinated approach to investment planning and responsive maintenance would protect the city's sustainability ambitions and strengthen the resilience of the entire leisure portfolio.

**A Better way of doing Business** – We are committed to delivering high-quality facilities that embrace modern technology and evolve alongside the needs of our customers. Our investment does not stop with the Leisure Transformation Programme. We will continue enhancing our centres so they remain valuable, vibrant spaces for local communities. We are also expanding our membership choices and programme offerings, ensuring that everyone has accessible opportunities to stay active and engaged.

GLL's ability to bring new products into Belfast's leisure offer relies on agile, data-driven decision making that responds quickly to emerging trends and community demand. By analysing participation patterns, tracking market shifts and engaging directly with local users, GLL can move at pace to pilot, refine and scale activities that enhance and diversify existing provision. Maintaining this rapid, informed decision-making model will keep Belfast ahead of evolving leisure trends and broaden its appeal across all age groups.

**More than a Job** – We see our work as more than just employment — it is a commitment to developing people. Our team is supported with strong training, a customer-first mindset, and opportunities to continually advance in their careers. As we grow, we're creating new pathways for professional development, helping our staff build meaningful and fulfilling futures within the company. With our services expanding in 2026, we are excited to strengthen our workforce and deepen our expertise to better serve the evolving needs of our community.

**Customers and Communities at our Heart** – We remain committed to offering clean, welcoming, and modern facilities that make smart use of technology and innovation to enhance the customer experience. Our group exercise programme will continue to expand, providing an even broader mix of activities for all ages — from juniors to older adults. Inclusivity will stay at the heart of our approach, with increased opportunities for people with disabilities to access and benefit from our leisure services.

With Belfast recognised as a European City of Sport, GLL will work in partnership with Belfast City Council to champion the work of our leisure centres, showcase the wide range of sports available across the city, celebrate the achievements of local sports clubs and athletes, and highlight the many ways people of all ages and abilities can get involved in sport.

Challenges remain in ensuring that everyone can easily access Belfast's leisure facilities, and removing those barriers is a key priority for GLL. Transport costs continue to be a significant obstacle, particularly for schools trying to deliver swimming lessons, and this is restricting growth in an essential area of provision. GLL will keep working closely with Sport NI, the NI Sports Forum, Swim Ulster and Translink to identify practical, sustainable solutions that make school swimming more accessible and support wider community participation.

**Tackling Health Inequalities** – We remain committed to encouraging less active members of our community to engage in physical activity, with a focus on juniors, over-55s, women, and people with disabilities. As our health programmes grow, we will explore new opportunities and referral pathways while working closely with Belfast City Council's Disability Advisory Panel to improve the accessibility of our facilities and programmes. To support this, we will invest in comprehensive staff training on disability inclusion, ensuring our team is equipped to deliver a truly inclusive experience for everyone.

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Pride of Place Awards 2026
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jim Girvan
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Frances Dennison

<b>Restricted Reports</b>					
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.					
Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>					
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>					
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table>				

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b></p> <p>To request approval to nominate 5 community initiatives from across the city for the IPB Pride of Place 2026 Awards.</p>
1.1	<p>If approval to proceed at 1.0 is given, to approve the following nominees and categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban Neighbourhood Over 3,000: Glencairn Community Project</li> <li>• Climate Action and Biodiversity: Connswater Community Greenway</li> <li>• Community Youth Initiative: Lagmore Youth Project</li> <li>• Community Wellbeing Initiative: Care Zone</li> <li>• Creative Communities: Sandy Row Digital Hub</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To approve nomination for 5 initiatives and associated costs</li> <li>• To approve the 5 nominees as outlined at 1.1</li> </ul>
2.1	
<b>3.0</b>	<p>IPB Pride of Place, in association with Co-operation Ireland, is an all-island competition that acknowledges the work that communities are doing all over the island of Ireland. The competition focus is about people coming together to shape, change and improve daily lives in their communities. It has been in existence since 2003.</p> <p>The competition is based on communities demonstrating directly to the judges, pride in their place by oral presentations where they highlight community activities, culture and many other aspects that contribute to their pride of place. It is also important that the community demonstrates a real partnership with their local authority and shows that all sectors of the community are included.</p> <p>The IPB Pride of Place offers community groups an opportunity to receive monetary awards and all island recognition for their various achievements and hard work. Celebrating community groups and allowing local authorities / councils the opportunity to applaud their efforts is at the heart of the IPB Pride of Place awards.</p> <p>Members may recall that in 2025, nominees R City won the top prize in the Community Youth Initiative category for their SHE (Supporting Her Empowerment) project. Also in 2025, SOLAS Specialist Support Services came second in the Inclusive Communities category for their work to support young users with autism.</p> <p>Entry is by way of council nomination. Each local authority may nominate groups in up to a maximum of five categories and one entry only in any individual category. Population categories are judged on all aspects of the community and single issue categories are judged on the specifics of that category.</p> <p>Given the size of the community and voluntary sector in Belfast and the number of categories, Officers have nominated 5 groups under separate categories which provide services/programmes across the City and meet the criteria laid down by IPB.</p>

The timeline for the Competition is as follows:

Entry Form Deadline	8 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Summary Form Deadline	5 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Judging Period	Mid-June to Early September
Awards Ceremony	24 <sup>th</sup> October 2026, held in Convention Centre Dublin

**Financial and Resource Implications**

Approximate cost of up to £10,000 to include:

Judges visit to Belfast accommodation and subsistence £1,000

5 Nomination entry fees (£500 fee per entry) £2,500

Costs associated with attendance at the awards ceremony in the Convention Centre, Dublin

Accommodation in Dublin £5,000

Travel costs to Dublin £1,500

Costs will be covered from existing budgets.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment**

None

4.0	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
4.1	2026 Information Brochure POP

This page is intentionally left blank



# ipb pride of place

in association with Co-operation Ireland

# Information Brochure



## IPB Pride of Place 2026

Co-operation Ireland, its local authority partners and its headline sponsor, IPB Insurance, are proud to present the prestigious Pride of Place Competition for the 24th consecutive year. The purpose of the competition is to acknowledge the work being done every day by communities all over the island of Ireland.

### A note from our Chairperson



“Co-operation Ireland, its local authority partners, and its headline sponsor IPB Insurance are proud to present the prestigious IPB Pride of Place Competition for the 24th consecutive year. Last year we celebrated with communities from all over the island at a magnificent awards dinner in the lovely Strand Hotel in Limerick City, hosted by Limerick City and County Council. I congratulate all the communities present, who were already winners and community exemplars by being nominated by their local authority to represent their place. I wish to thank Co-operation Ireland for their ongoing commitment to leading this competition and I want to particularly welcome IPB Insurance as the headline sponsor for the fifteenth consecutive year. I acknowledge IPB’s recognition of the importance of looking after the communities their customers serve. I also wish to congratulate IPB as it celebrates 100 years as Ireland’s only indigenous mutual insurer.

I wish all the communities and groups in this year’s competition every success and thank them for their participation. I look forward to visiting many of them, with our experienced volunteer judges.”

Tom Dowling Chairperson, IPB Pride of Place (In association with Co-operation Ireland)

## How to enter

The IPB Pride of Place competition is open to all local community groups, by way of local authority nomination only. Applications should be completed online at [www.prideofplace.ie](http://www.prideofplace.ie). The closing date for receiving completed applications (including photograph and summary information) is Friday 5th June 2026.

Entry is by way of council nomination. Each local authority may nominate groups in up to a maximum of five categories and one entry only in any individual category. Please note that population categories are judged on all aspects of the community and single issue categories are judged on the specifics of that category.

## 2026 Categories

1. Population 0-300
2. Population 300-1000
3. Population 1000-2000
4. Population 2000-5000
5. Population Over 5000
6. Creative Communities
7. Climate Action and Biodiversity
8. Community Youth Initiative
9. Inclusive Communities
10. Community Wellbeing Initiative
11. Community Tourism Initiative
12. Age Friendly Communities
13. Urban Neighbourhoods and Housing Estates

### CITY CATEGORIES

1. Urban Neighbourhood under 3,000
2. Urban Neighbourhood over 3,000
3. Creative Communities
4. Climate Action & Biodiversity
5. Community Youth Initiative
6. Inclusive Communities
7. Community Wellbeing Initiative



## 2026 Timeline

### Entry Form Deadline: Friday 8th May

Submit basic details, including group name and category.

### Summary Form Deadline: Friday 5th June

Finalise your entry with a summary and photograph.

### Judging Period: Mid-June to Early September

Judges will visit entries during this time.

### Awards Ceremony: Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October

The Convention Centre Dublin



## Contact us

If you require any support or any additional information on Pride of Place 2026, please contact:

Hazel Scott: [hscott@cooperationireland.org](mailto:hscott@cooperationireland.org)

Pride of Place: [prideofplace@cooperationireland.org](mailto:prideofplace@cooperationireland.org)

## IPB Insurance

IPB Insurance is a mutual general insurance company. As an experienced underwriter of major liability, property and motor risks, we insure some of the largest risks in the private, semi-state and particularly in the public sector.

We are delighted to protect our members and their communities across the length and breadth of the island of Ireland. For further information on the work of IPB Insurance, visit:

[www.ipb.ie](http://www.ipb.ie).

## Co-operation Ireland

Since Co-operation Ireland was established 45 years ago, we have been delivering effective and impactful cross-community and all-island programmes, which support our vision of a peaceful and stable island where people of all backgrounds live and work together for a better future. Our mission is to sustain peace by helping to build a shared and cohesive society. For more information, visit:

[www.cooperationireland.org](http://www.cooperationireland.org).



<b>Subject:</b>	Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (IAPF) and CSP Funding 2026/27
<b>Date:</b>	14 April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jim Girvan – Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>
----------------



Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>																		
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advise members that Council has received confirmation from The Department for Communities of an allocation for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund 2026/27 and seek agreement from members on allocation of this award.</li> <li>update members on the CSP Funding which is received on an annual basis from DfC</li> <li>advise members of the correspondence received from the Department in respect of the Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face) funding and seek their views on how to proceed.</li> <li>Request that members approve release of a further 25% Social Supermarket funding based on the recent DfC correspondence.</li> </ul>																		
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>																		
2.1	<p>Members are asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the contents of the report,</li> <li>consider the allocation options presented for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund, agree their preferred option and approve payment of 25% following submission of eligible proposals,</li> <li>consider DfC's response in relation to Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face) funding and provide a recommendation on how to proceed.</li> <li>approve release of a further 25% Social Supermarket funding based on the recent DfC correspondence.</li> </ul>																		
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>																		
3.1	<p><b>Background information</b></p> <p><u>Integrated Advice Partnership Fund</u></p> <p>Members will recall that in November 2024 Council received funding from DfC of £248,253.48 through the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund for activity in 24/26. The objective of the fund is to 'Improve the uptake of free, independent regulated debt advice through a collaborative partnership approach'.</p>																		
3.2	<p>Members agreed that council would invite applications from all BCC funded advice organisations. Based on all proposals received covering the duration of the fund the following funding allocations were agreed which are outlined in Table 1.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Organisation</th> <th>Allocation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>City Centre and East Belfast</td> <td>Advice Space</td> <td>£94,022.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Belfast</td> <td>Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)</td> <td>£36,389.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Belfast</td> <td>The Vine Centre</td> <td>£60,392.32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Belfast</td> <td>Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)</td> <td>£57,448.94</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>£248,253.49</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 1</p>	Area	Organisation	Allocation	City Centre and East Belfast	Advice Space	£94,022.80	South Belfast	Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)	£36,389.43	North Belfast	The Vine Centre	£60,392.32	West Belfast	Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)	£57,448.94	Total		£248,253.49
Area	Organisation	Allocation																	
City Centre and East Belfast	Advice Space	£94,022.80																	
South Belfast	Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)	£36,389.43																	
North Belfast	The Vine Centre	£60,392.32																	
West Belfast	Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)	£57,448.94																	
Total		£248,253.49																	

3.3 In September 2025, Council received an additional in-year allocation of £79,784.78 for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund. Members agreed the option to allocate the funding equally between the four providers. Thus, in addition to the figures presented in Table 1 above each provider received an additional £19,946.20.

3.4 We have recently received notification from DfC that the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund 2026/27 is £84,363.13. In addition to this allocation providers can carry underspends for 2025/26 into the 2026/27 financial year.

3.5 Members are asked to consider the following options for the 2026/27 and agree their preferred option. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the allocation per option.

- Option 1 Allocation based on % of the previous funding to each group.
- Option 2 Allocation based on an equal split between the four organisations

3.6

Organisations	Previous Allocation	Allocation % Of Total	Option 1 Uplift based on %	Option 2 Uplift Equal Split
Advice Space	£113,969.00	34.7%	£29,309.95	£21,090.79
Southcity RDC	£56,335.63	17.2%	£14,488.10	£21,090.79
Vine Centre	£80,338.52	24.5%	£20,661.04	£21,090.79
Upper Springfield Development Trust	£77,395.14	23.6%	£19,904.07	£21,090.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>£328,038.29</b>		<b>£84,363.16</b>	<b>£84,363.16</b>

Table 2

CSP Letter of Offer

3.7 Currently Council has yet to receive the Community Support Programme (CSP), Letter of Offer 26/27 from DfC. However, on 26th March, the Department issued the correspondence attached in Appendix 1. There was an accompanying email which clarified that council would receive a 25% allocation to cover all CSP activity until 30 June 2026 and that an additional Letter of Offer for the IAPF would follow. On this basis members are asked to approve that officers will seek proposals from funded groups for 26/27 and following review approve allocations and issue 25% funding.

3.8 Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face)

Members may recall that another element of activity that is 100% funded through the CSP LoO is Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face). Officers had previously sought approval to combine this element of funding with generalist advice funding as both support similar activity and it provides continuity of funding for delivery organisations. Members had deferred a decision and instructed officers to contact DfC to ask that they administer this support. DfC have responded as outlined below;

*The Department provides funding for local advice services to all Councils through the Community Support Programme (CSP), which is match funded by Councils. Councils play an important role as co funders and commissioners of community based generalist advice, including the additional provision funded under Welfare Mitigations, to meet local need in their respective areas. At present, the Department has no plans to move away from this approach.*

*As with all funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector, we recognise the challenges posed by the absence of a multi year budget settlement. Whilst we cannot confirm exact annual budget levels at this stage, the Executive approved the extension of the additional Welfare Mitigations allocations in December 2024 through to March 2028. This decision reflects the continued demand for advice services and the need to preserve existing sector capacity to support vulnerable individuals navigating the social security system.*

*For clarity and budgetary purposes, we are unable to combine these funding streams into a single line within the CSP Letter of Offer at this time. However, we would encourage Councils to commission these services together, as the majority of other Councils already do. While multi year budgets have not been possible in recent years, other Councils continue to commission advice services on a multi year basis, including a clause stating that continuation beyond year one is subject to DfC funding being confirmed.*

3.9 Members are asked to consider this response and advise how they wish to proceed in relation to Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face) funding.

3.10 Members may recall that this funding is allocated to specific advice organisations in each area. These were the organisations that were receiving funding from DfC when the fund was initially introduced and administered by the Department of Communities. When council agreed to administer this funding in 2020/21 we also agreed to continue this allocation method. In 25/26, members agreed that if the named organisation did not submit a proposal in a timely way, proposals would be sought from the consortia through the consortia lead. Table 3 below provides more detail;

<b>Consortia – Funded Organisation</b>	<b>% Of Total Allocation</b>	<b>25/26 Allocation</b>
Central - Advice Space	46.74%	£125,585.24
East - EBIAC	13.32%	£35,779.89
West – Neighbourhood Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89
South - Ballynaveigh Community Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89
North – Ligoniel Improvement Association	13.32%	£35,779.89

Table 3

3.11 Social Supermarket funding  
Members are also asked to note that this communication relates to Social Supermarket funding and provides 25% funding for 26/27. SP&R agreed at March committee that they would issue 25% funding in the absence of a DfC LoO. Members are asked to approve release of a further 25% based on the recent DfC correspondence. This would provide continuity of service in the absence of a DfC LoO which is unlikely to be received before June committee.

4.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

4.1 The administration of this fund will be carried out by existing staff, there is no financial impact for council as 100% funding is being provided by DfC.

<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
5.1	This funding seeks to provide new opportunities for people to access debt and generalist advice and will have a positive impact on addressing inequalities.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached or None</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correspondence from Department for Communities re CSP Funding March 26</li> <li>2. Accounts Direction 2025/26 – INTEGRATED ADVICE PARTNERSHIP FUND</li> </ol>

This page is intentionally left blank

**From: The Minister**

Voluntary and Community Organisations

Via e-mail

Dear Chair

## **INTERIM BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR THE 2026-27 FINANCIAL YEAR**

I recognise the vital role that community and voluntary sector organisations play in tackling deprivation across our communities. You address the challenges that present most acutely at local level, doing so with persistence, innovation and compassion. I greatly value the contribution you make in supporting individuals, families and communities, often in the most difficult circumstances, and in delivering meaningful and lasting outcomes.

Against this backdrop, I am writing in relation to interim budget allocations for the 2026-27 financial year. The Executive has not agreed the Draft Budget 2026-30 and to ensure business continuity, I am issuing interim allocations for 2026–27 pending agreement of a final Budget.

The Finance Minister published a draft 2026-30 Budget on 6 January 2026, followed by an 8-week consultation which closed on 3 March 2026.

For my Department, the impact of the current draft 2026-27 Budget for resource DEL is effectively flat cash, with no additional budget to address pay awards and inflationary pressures. In addition, my Department has not been advised as to how the Treasury Reserve Claim of £400m which is to be repaid over three years at £80m/£160m/£160m will

be handled. There is potential for the draft allocation to DfC to be reduced accordingly. It is in this stark context that my Department is currently considering 5% and 10% budget reduction scenarios, with options on how best to manage a constrained budget and deliver a balanced position.

I recognise the impact that budgetary uncertainty has on your staff and your organisations.

In an effort to alleviate some of the immediate pressures that organisations are facing, I have taken the decision to provide a level of financial support to help sustain services and to help you retain vital staff. This support will be provided by the Department to cover the three-month period up to 30 June 2026 with interim allocations based on your opening 2025-26 allocation, subject to normal approvals. These payments will begin to issue week commencing 6 April 2026.

I need to make you aware that this allocation cannot be interpreted as an indication or commitment to the level of funding available for the remainder of 2026-27, given the absence of clarity on the overall budget settlement for the Department.

I realise, of course, that uncertainty over the budget position provides very significant management challenges for both the Department and your organisations, therefore I would encourage continued close engagement to ensure the continuity of key public services.

I will further update you on your 2026-27 Budget once the 2026-27 Department's allocation has been set and allocations agreed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', written in a cursive style.

**Gordon Lyons MLA**  
**Minister for Communities**

**JEFF GLASS**  
**Local Government & Housing**  
**Regulation Division**

Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
BELFAST BT2 7EG

Telephone: (028) 9082 3375

Email: [Jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Our reference: CO1/25/522001

Date: 12 March 2026

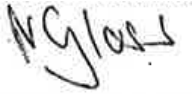
Dear Chief Executive/Finance Officer

## **ACCOUNTS DIRECTION 2025/26 – INTEGRATED ADVICE PARTNERSHIP FUND**

1. In exercise of its powers under Article 24(2) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the Regulations), the Department hereby directs that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 should comply with this direction.
2. Councils were allocated £855,800 in 2024/25 and £890,013 in 2025/26 for an Integrated Advice Partnership fund. The purpose of this fund is to increase the reach of debt advice, focusing on funding proposals which enable better integration of debt advice funding and services, collaboration for early intervention and prevention to increase the reach of debt advice. This approach is grounded in joint advice partnerships; connecting services to improve the uptake of debt advice reach via an integrated approach.
3. Collaborative and integrated advice delivery can involve a range of options which could be to test new innovations or to maximise existing services and networks, for example: pro-active information and awareness raising activities, providing advice in accessible settings such as social supermarkets, food banks, doctors surgeries, faith-based groups and other less traditional advice locations including partnering with organisations such as Christians Against Poverty, Trussell Trust and others who work in local communities.
4. All unused funding should be transferred to a usable reserve in 2025/26 and ring-fenced for the purposes allocated, and this funding should be used within the 2026/27 financial year. A separate disclosure should be made to identify any unspent funding within the accounts.

5. Should you require clarification on any of the above matters, please contact Barry Leighton on 028 90 515256 or [AdviceServices.Team@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:AdviceServices.Team@communities-ni.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Glass". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "G".

Jeff Glass  
Head of Finance



<b>Subject:</b>	Summer Scheme for Children with Additional Needs Funding
<b>Date:</b>	14 April 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jim Girvan – Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<p><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p><b>Never</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>
----------------



<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
--	-----	-------------------------------------	----

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update members on the outcome of the open call funding programme for Summer Scheme Funding for Children with Additional Needs</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p><b>Background information</b></p> <p>3.1 Members will be aware that the Summer Scheme for Children with Additional Needs grant was first introduced in 23/24 to support participation in summer scheme activity for children unable to access mainstream provision in Belfast. Neighbourhood Services administered the fund in the two initial years 23/24 and 24/25.</p> <p>3.2 In June 2025, SP&amp;R committee agreed that they would allocate £120,000 to support the funding programme in 26/27 and that it would be administered through the Central Grants Unit, using the corporate approach to small grants. Small grants are up to £10,000 per annum and these are awarded through delegated authority by the directors of relevant departments.</p> <p>3.3 The Summer Scheme for Children with disabilities and/or additional needs grant supports local community, voluntary organisations and Special Educational Need schools to run a summer scheme for children and young people between 5 and 17 years of age with disabilities and/or additional needs who have restricted/limited access to any other summer scheme, programmes, or services during the summer months due to support needs.</p> <p>3.3 The Council's Small Grants 2026/27 Tranche 1 opened on Monday 20 October 2025 and closed on Friday 9 January 2026. In October 2025, Belfast City Council launched a campaign to advertise and promote all the Council's small grants. Advertisements were placed in local and regional newspapers and were also promoted across Belfast city Council website and social media.</p> <p>During November 2025, information sessions were held both in-person and virtually to advise applicants.</p> <p><b>Central Grants Unit (CGU) administer the small grants and carry out duties including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receipt and log of applications</li> <li>- Eligibility check of applications</li> <li>- Supply applications that have met eligibility criteria to Community &amp; Neighbourhood Services Officers</li> <li>- Officers to score against agreed set criteria</li> <li>- Organisation of assessment moderation panels</li> <li>- Informing groups of their successful, unsuccessful or ineligible applications</li> <li>- Issuing of letters of offer</li> </ul>

3.4	For the Summer Scheme for Children with Disabilities and/or additional needs 19 applications were submitted totalling £140,321.29, all 19 applications were eligible and were assessed by Neighbourhood Services staff in line with agreed criteria. All organisations scored 50 and above and were recommended for funding with ineligible costs deducted from the requested amount. A list of all organisations and recommended awards is provided in Appendix 1.
3.5	Following approval through Delegated Authority from the Director, CGU will notify successful, unsuccessful and ineligible applicants, distribute letters of offer, and conduct mandatory training workshops for successful applicants.
4.0	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
4.1	The administration of this fund will be carried out by existing staff, all funding awards can be made within existing budgets.
4.2	At June 2025 SP&R elected members agreed an available budget of £120,000 for this funding programme in 26/27. Officers have identified an additional £15, 431.26 from underspends in relevant existing budgets to increase the overall budget to £135,431.26. This will ensure that all projects will receive funding.
5.0	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
5.1	This funding seeks to provide access to summer scheme activity for children living with disabilities or additional needs and will have a positive impact on equality.
6.0	<b><u>Appendices - Documents Attached or None</u></b>
6.1	Appendix 1 - Summer Scheme for Children with disabilities and/or additional needs grant awards

This page is intentionally left blank

**Appendix 1 - Summer Scheme for Children with disabilities and/or additional needs grant awards**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Amount recommended</b>
1	SOLAS SPECIAL NEEDS -	£10,000.00
2	Kids Together Belfast	£10,000.00
3	Glenbank Community Association	£6,693.50
4	Greenwich Leisure Limited	£10,000.00
5	Shine Autism Support Group	£9,900.00
6	SEN Space Care and Respite Services CIC	£9,052.56
7	Blackmountain Action Group	£2,500.00
8	You2Me Play	£9,700.00
9	174 Trust /Duncairn Arts	£10,000.00
10	Belfast Activity Centre	£4,000.00
11	Cumann Spoirt An Phobail	£4,300.00
12	Windsor Tennis Club	£1,500.00
13	Together 21 Northern Ireland	£7,002.50
14	Open Arts	£8,122.00
15	Belvoir ASD Family Support Group	£3,291.00
16	Happy Women of Belfast Limited	£10,000.00
17	Donegall Pass Community Forum	£2,894.70
18	Happy Days Arts Community Interest Company	£7,150.00
19	Hanwood Trust	£9,325.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£135,431.26</b>

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Biodiversity programme of work update
Date:	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Operational Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Eiméar McCullough, Lead Officer, Open Space & Streetscene Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer Open Space & Streetscene

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on Council's delivery of a £1.5M+ biodiversity programme of work being progressed both with support of funding agreed by Members and awarded by external funders in 25/26 financial year.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report and the accompanying work programme table ( <b>Appendix 1</b> ).
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>

3.1	<b>Background and Context</b>
3.2	Members will recall that in response to Member request for an update be provided regarding a Notice of Motion entitled, “Biodiversity in the Council Parks and Open Spaces” a report was brought to Committee in January 2025 updating on ongoing work and resourcing issues associated with Council’s delivery of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan and other Council biodiversity priorities, and the steps which might be taken in address. (see <b>Appendix 2 – ‘Update on Local Biodiversity Action Plan Development’ – People and Communities report 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025)</b> )
3.3	Since that time Open Spaces and StreetScene (OSS) has benefited from an injection of funding resources to support delivery on our biodiversity commitments across the city. Directly in response to the report, as part of the District Rate setting process for 2025/26 Members agreed a package of resourcing to progress a number of identified project priorities including:
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>£35,000</b> (one off) to scope and develop a LBAP for Belfast</li> <li>• <b>£50,000</b> (annual budget) to support baseline ecological studies, habitat surveys, and site management plan development, including delivery of site-specific biodiversity actions</li> <li>• <b>£50,000</b> (one off) to support delivery of the Urban Meadows project citywide</li> <li>• <b>£100,000</b> (one off) for wider biodiversity measures</li> </ul>
3.5	Further to this, Members will also be aware that Council officers successfully secured external funding for a further two large-scale projects including:
3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £850,514 National Lottery Heritage Funding towards a Nature Town Cities initiative revenue project ‘Breaking Through Barriers to Connect People and Nature’ to support nature recovery. This was 92% of the total approved Project cost of £924,418, with in kind contributions from the Council and delivery partner Ulster Wildlife (<b>see Appendix 3 – ‘Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award’– People and Communities report 5th Aug 2025)</b>)</li> </ul>
3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £472,000 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEARA) Challenge Funding towards the ‘Belfast is Making Space for Nature’ capital project to enhance nature and climate recovery and to connect people with the environment by developing Conservation Management Plans and a Nature Recovery Network across Belfast. This is 90% of the total approved Project cost of £ £522,500 with Council contribution of works to value of £50,500. (<b>see Appendix 4 – ‘DAERA Funding Award and Update on the NoM on Urban Meadows’– People and Communities report 7th Oct 2025)</b>)</li> </ul>
3.9	The table set out in <b>Appendix 1</b> is to be considered by way of update on the delivery of £1.5M+ biodiversity programme of work. This programme detailed is in addition to ongoing work strands delivered across OSS aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity across our estate including control of invasives (NIEA requirement); Monitoring biodiversity outcomes delivered via partnership arrangements with Strategic Partnerships Lagan Valley

<p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p>	<p>Regional Trust (for Lagan Valley Regional Park) and Belfast Hills Partnership (for Belfast Hills); and ongoing provision of design advisory function for Council capital projects. Members should note that a further £100,000 agreed for further Biodiversity Measures project is currently also being scoped by officers and a future report will detail how this money will be spent.</p> <p>In addition to the overall programme, the recent award of \$1 million (approximately £750,000) through the Bloomberg Philanthropies 2025–2026 Mayors Challenge to implement an Alleyways Transformation Project strengthening our existing commitment and plans to enhance alleyways. This project will also deliver positive outcomes in relation to biodiversity and climate resilience for the city.</p> <p>Members should note that further update report on the programme of work will be brought to Committee in due course.</p> <p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b> N/A</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></b> There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this paper.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1- Biodiversity Programme of Work</p> <p>Appendix 2 – ‘Update on Local Biodiversity Action Plan Development’ – P&amp;C report 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025</p> <p>Appendix 3 – ‘Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award’– P&amp;C report 5th Aug 2025</p> <p>Appendix 4 – ‘DAERA Funding Award and Update on the NoM on Urban Meadows’– P&amp;C report 7th Oct 2025</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

## Appendix 1 Biodiversity – Ongoing Work Programme

**Table 1: Biodiversity – Ongoing Work Programme**

Project	Status
<b>Recruitment of Biodiversity Officer</b>	A further Biodiversity Officer is now successfully in post and supporting work streams in conjunction with existing Biodiversity Officer and Open Space and Streetscene Service.
<b>Local Biodiversity Plan (LBAP) for Belfast</b>	<p>Members approved funding last financial year to support the development of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Belfast. Development is statutory responsibility of Council and will provide a mechanism for local delivery on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across the city. It will set out local priorities for action, along with targets for priority habitats, species, and locally important wildlife sites.</p> <p>ARUP Consulting were successfully appointed in January to lead on the project. Our newly appointed Biodiversity Officer is working closely with their project team on the development of the draft plan, including an ongoing biodiversity data audit and assessment and associated stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>At this point it is envisaged that a further update on the LBAP and the planned consultation will be presented to Committee in June. It is anticipated that public consultation on the draft plan, hosted on the Your Say platform, will run for 14 weeks between July and September and will include drop-in events, with the final plan expected to be in place later in the Autumn.</p>
<b>Habitat Surveys – data collection for a baseline</b>	<p>Work to establish up-to-date ecological baseline for Council’s open space sites ongoing following Members agreement of funding. In addition to informing the development of the LBAP and the Nature Town and Cities (NTC) project – recommendations emerging from these surveys will help shape future management plans and capital development proposals.</p> <p>Sites where extending opening hour and park lighting are being considered through our Capital Programme, as well as on our existing 23 Green-Flag accredited sites are being prioritised, to ensure site-specific ecological recommendations can be considered within relevant management plans.</p> <p>Extended Phase 1 habitat surveys have been completed for nine sites: Ormeau, Botanic, Belmont, Falls, Glencairn, Musgrave and Dunville Parks and Grove Playing Fields. Recommendations identified include measures relating to protected species and the management of invasive species. Site manager engagement to review and agree next steps is now planned.</p>

## Appendix 1 Biodiversity – Ongoing Work Programme

<p><b>‘Breaking Through Barriers to Connect People and Nature’ - Nature Towns and Cities Project</b></p>	<p>Members will be aware that at the People and Communities Committee in August they were advised of the award of £850,514 funding towards a revenue project ‘Breaking Through Barriers to Connect People and Nature’ to support nature recovery (total project cost £924,41). (See <b>Appendix 3 – ‘Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award’</b>– P&amp;C report 5th Aug 2025)</p> <p>As part of the UK-wide Nature Towns and Cities programme (NTC) and funded by Lottery Heritage Funded, the new revenue project which is being delivered in partnership with Ulster Wildlife – was officially launched at City Hall by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Paul Doherty on 10<sup>th</sup> March.)</p> <p>Project governance arrangements are being established and recruitment of NTC project team (Project Manager, Conservation and Evidence Officer and Engagement Officer) has been successfully completed and all will be in post later this month.</p> <p>The project’s 4 key elements include: strengthening evidence base; enhancing existing open spaces for biodiversity; identifying opportunities to ‘green the grey’; and enhancing organisational sustainability and volunteering.</p> <p>Over the next two years the project will work to strengthen connections between people and nature across the city by collaborating with stakeholders and communities to co-design a shared vision - including plans and mechanisms for nature’s recovery for Belfast and surrounding areas. This will include including exploring practical ways to bring more nature into everyday spaces.</p>
<p><b>‘Belfast is Making Space for Nature’ – DAERA funded project</b></p>	<p>Members were advised at the People and Communities Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> October of the successful award of £472,000 from the DAERA Challenge Fund for this capital project, with a total value of £522,500 and a Council contribution of £50,500. (See <b>Appendix 4 – DAERA Funding Award and Update on the NoM on Urban Meadows</b>, P&amp;C report, 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2025.)</p> <p>Over the next two years, the project will create a landscape-scale Nature Recovery Network across Belfast, improving habitat extent, condition, and connectivity. Progress to date includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with key partners to identify current and future collaborative project opportunities.</li> <li>• Purchase of essential machinery for managing existing and new meadow areas.</li> <li>• Procurement of 200m of fencing as part of a wider conacre fencing project to support grazing at Lagan Meadows and Cave Hill.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 Biodiversity – Ongoing Work Programme

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gorse removal on Cave Hill to restore heathland and reduce wildfire risk (Climate Programme funded).</li> </ul> <p>Priorities for this financial year include developing Conservation Management Plans, delivering staff and stakeholder training, creating demonstration sites, and progressing recommendations from Habitat Surveys, including identifying funding opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Belfast Tree Strategy</b></p>	<p>Council's has delivered a series of tree planting and hedgerow initiatives across the city during the recent tree planting season (November to March) in support of the One Million Trees initiative, and a new Community Orchard Project, which will be rolled out city wide over the next number of years, with support of new Woodland Officers, was launched in March 2026 at Shaw's Bridge. In total 12,000 native trees, 1179 linear metres of hedging have been planted. Thirty-six tree related events have also been facilitated, involving more than 325 participants from community and corporate groups, schools, and international student organisations.</p> <p>Partnership working also continues to strengthen through collaborative tree planting initiatives with the Woodland Trust and the National Trust in line with the aspirations of the Belfast Tree Establishment Strategy.</p> <p>As part of ongoing Tree Risk Management work- and supported by dedicated funding secured in the last year financial year - diseased Ash trees have been removed from identified sites, including Lyric Wood and Waterworks Park and replaced with native trees with further planting planned.</p>
<p><b>Urban Meadows Project</b> – capital work for meadow habitat creation</p>	<p>Members will recall that, at the People and Communities Committee meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October, they received an update on plans to utilise the recently allocated £50,000 budget to deliver the Notice of Motion on Urban Meadows. Under this Notice of Motion, it had been agreed to <i>"identify a suitable site for wildflower cultivation in each quadrant of Belfast."</i> Following a prioritisation process, the four selected sites were Glencairn Park, Ormeau Park, Belmont Park, and Brook Leisure Centre. (See <b>Appendix 4 – DAERA Funding Award and Update on the NoM on Urban Meadows, P&amp;C report, 7th Oct 2025</b>)</p> <p>Following further assessment of site-specific factors, it has been agreed that project delivery will now take place during the Autumn/Winter 2026–27 growing season. A tender is currently being developed via the Council's capital planning processes for contractors to implement the works.</p>

## Appendix 1 Biodiversity – Ongoing Work Programme

	<p>Associated resource requirements to ensure project sustainability - including additional machinery and staff training on the establishment and management of species-rich grassland- are being progressed through parallel project workstreams.</p>
<p><b>Replacement Fencing at Conacre Grazing Sites</b></p>	<p>A total of £117,00 of funding in place to deliver replacement fencing at our key grazing sites at Lagan Meadows and Cavehill to accommodate our improved management of priority habitats through grazing in line with site management plans. Fencing works are scheduled for September post bird-nesting season.</p> <p>This project is being facilitated through internal funding and funding secured through 'Belfast is Making Space for Nature' – DAERA funded project to purchase fencing materials for both sites.</p>
<p><b>Climate Action Programme - funded projects</b></p>	<p>Work on key Climate Action Programme funded biodiversity projects complete and further works ongoing and planned for this year. Delivery will contribute to key partner funded projects this year, i.e. gorse removal on Cave Hill to restore priority heathland habitat and reduce the risk of wildfires contributing to climate resilience as part of Belfast is Making Space for Nature project.</p>
<p><b>Herbicide Reduction</b></p>	<p>In response to a Member NOM a Herbicide Reduction Protocol is currently in being drafted by officers. In the final stages of completion this internal document will outline our commitment to reduce the use and reliance on herbicides across the council estate, in line with best practice. Final trialling of alternative weed control methods and engagement with operational managers is ongoing.</p>



Subject:	Update on Local Biodiversity Action Plan Development
Date:	14th January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard – Director of Resources, Fleet and OSS
Contact Officer:	Eiméar McCullough, Lead Officer, Open Space & Streetscene Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Spaces & Streetscene

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on the ongoing work to scope and develop the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), including an update on additional resources required to support development and ongoing delivery of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and associated Belfast Implementation Plan (BIP).
1.2	This report should also be considered as an update on the Notice of motion put forward in February 2024 titled 'Biodiversity in Council Parks and Open Spaces'.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b>Background and Context</b>

3.1	<p>Members will be aware that since the development of the original Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) in 2007, there have been a number of policy and legislative changes including the introduction of a statutory biodiversity duty on the Council to further the conservation of biodiversity.</p>												
3.2	<p>At People and Communities Committee in November 2024, members were provided with a six-month update report on the 2024 – 25 committee plan. Within the report officers noted the delayed progress on the development of a Local Biodiversity Plan. Since then, officers have been working to progress work on this matter. These are detailed in the <b>table 1</b> below.</p>												
3.3	<p>Furthermore, a Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Brooks in February 2024:</p> <p><i>‘Officers are asked to submit a report outlining how the Council could commission a survey of parks and green spaces to create a list of priority habitats and species within them, this survey should be robust enough to inform future work of incorporating recommendations for new zoning of parks and introduction of appropriate management prescriptions into site management plans, to protect and enhance biodiversity in our parks and green spaces in accordance with the Lawton principles of "bigger, better and more joined up".</i></p> <p>This paper is to be considered by way of update to that Notice of Motion.</p>												
3.4	<p><b>Table 1: Biodiversity - Priority Forward Work Programme</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="272 1077 1465 1982"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="272 1077 608 1137">Item</th> <th data-bbox="608 1077 1034 1137">Purpose</th> <th data-bbox="1034 1077 1465 1137">Action(s)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 1137 608 1435"><b>Recruitment of Biodiversity Officer</b></td> <td data-bbox="608 1137 1034 1435">To support the LBAP work programme delivery, recruitment of an additional officer recently agreed by Members is key. We anticipate recruiting to this post in early 2025.</td> <td data-bbox="1034 1137 1465 1435">Officers will continue to work closely with HR to ensure additional officer post can be advertised in January 2025, with recruitment to complete in March 2025.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 1435 608 1865"><b>Development of Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Belfast</b></td> <td data-bbox="608 1435 1034 1865">To deliver on statutory responsibilities aligned to biodiversity protection and enhancement.</td> <td data-bbox="1034 1435 1465 1865">Re-submit application to Council’s Climate Resilience Fund for consideration early 2025, should additional funds become available.  If unsuccessful, alternative options for one off pot of funding (circa £30k) to be explored to support development of LBAP</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 1865 608 1982"><b>LBAP baseline preparation</b></td> <td data-bbox="608 1865 1034 1982">Establishment of up-to-date ecological data for all (89) BCC open space sites, for</td> <td data-bbox="1034 1865 1465 1982">To prepare a costed five-year delivery plan baselining and ecological study update and</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Purpose	Action(s)	<b>Recruitment of Biodiversity Officer</b>	To support the LBAP work programme delivery, recruitment of an additional officer recently agreed by Members is key. We anticipate recruiting to this post in early 2025.	Officers will continue to work closely with HR to ensure additional officer post can be advertised in January 2025, with recruitment to complete in March 2025.	<b>Development of Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Belfast</b>	To deliver on statutory responsibilities aligned to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	Re-submit application to Council’s Climate Resilience Fund for consideration early 2025, should additional funds become available.  If unsuccessful, alternative options for one off pot of funding (circa £30k) to be explored to support development of LBAP	<b>LBAP baseline preparation</b>	Establishment of up-to-date ecological data for all (89) BCC open space sites, for	To prepare a costed five-year delivery plan baselining and ecological study update and
Item	Purpose	Action(s)											
<b>Recruitment of Biodiversity Officer</b>	To support the LBAP work programme delivery, recruitment of an additional officer recently agreed by Members is key. We anticipate recruiting to this post in early 2025.	Officers will continue to work closely with HR to ensure additional officer post can be advertised in January 2025, with recruitment to complete in March 2025.											
<b>Development of Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Belfast</b>	To deliver on statutory responsibilities aligned to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	Re-submit application to Council’s Climate Resilience Fund for consideration early 2025, should additional funds become available.  If unsuccessful, alternative options for one off pot of funding (circa £30k) to be explored to support development of LBAP											
<b>LBAP baseline preparation</b>	Establishment of up-to-date ecological data for all (89) BCC open space sites, for	To prepare a costed five-year delivery plan baselining and ecological study update and											

		prioritisation and delivery over a five-year period. Includes updating existing suite of ecological studies as well as development of new where required. Initial focus to be on Green Flag accredited and those where opening hour pilots are being considered.	review work. On completion of each study, site specific recommendations within reports to be considered within relevant management plans.				
	<b>Herbicide Reduction Policy</b>	Work to commence on developing the herbicide reduction policy to outline our commitment to reduce the use and reliance on herbicides across the council estate, in line with best practice regarding weed control and land management.	Progress once additional internal resourcing/support in place				
	<b>Resourcing - additional requirements</b>	It is recognised that current resources are insufficient to deliver. At this stage officers estimate that a one-off cost of £35k is now required to scope and develop the LBAP; with additional £50k per annum required to support development of associated baseline ecological studies in parallel, including delivery of site-specific actions identified within.	Preparation of growth proposal submission to support delivery of statutory biodiversity responsibilities including LBAP development and delivery.  Officer with explore requirement for funding development of associated Belfast Implementation Plan (BIP) once LBAP is in place				
3.5	<p><b>Ongoing Biodiversity Work Programme</b></p> <p>The work programme above is in addition to ongoing work strands delivered across OSS aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity across our estate. These are detailed in table two below.</p>						
3.6	<p><b>Table 2: Biodiversity – Ongoing Work Programme:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project</th> <th>Outcome/ status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Climate Action Programme funded projects: Carbon</b></td> <td>Work on key Climate Action Programme funded biodiversity projects (Carbon retention assessment at Cavehill; Species</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Project	Outcome/ status	<b>Climate Action Programme funded projects: Carbon</b>	Work on key Climate Action Programme funded biodiversity projects (Carbon retention assessment at Cavehill; Species
Project	Outcome/ status						
<b>Climate Action Programme funded projects: Carbon</b>	Work on key Climate Action Programme funded biodiversity projects (Carbon retention assessment at Cavehill; Species						

	retention assessment at Cavehill & Species rich grassland pilots (phase one)	rich grassland pilot) successfully complete pending submission of close out reports.
	<b>Grassland Management</b>	Delivery of sixteen hectares of wildflower and species rich grassland habitat across Council sites in partnership with Bugslife through 'Belfast is Buzzing' project as well as associated management plans. Sites include Clement Wilson Park; Lagan Lands East; Belmont Park; Barnetts Demesne; Sharman Road Open Space; Lower Botanic Park (Upsurge site); Annadale Embankment; St James' Park, Orangefield Park; and Andersonstown Leisure Centre site.  Management workshop to identify potential further sites in advance of 2025 planting season scheduled.
	<b>Pollinator Awards</b>	Musgrave Park Pollinator Award and Falls Park Pollinator Award (Green Flag 2024) - recognising best practice support of pollinating insects through pollinator-friendly site management
	<b>Control of invasives</b>	Ongoing monitoring and management across Council Estate (NIEA requirement)
	<b>Strategic Partnerships</b>	Monitoring biodiversity outcomes delivered via partnership arrangements with Lagan Valley Regional Trust (for Lagan Valley Regional Park) and Belfast Hills Partnership (for Belfast Hills)
	<b>Capital Projects</b>	Ongoing provision of design advisory function for Council capital projects
3.7	<b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b> Officers estimate that an additional £50k per annum will be required to support delivery of the LBAP and BIP. Furthermore, officers estimate that an additional one-off cost of £35k will also be required to scope and develop the LBAP. None of these costs are included within the revenue estimates for 2025/26.	
3.8	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></b> There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.	
4.0	<b>Appendices</b>	
	None.	



Subject:	Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award
Date:	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director Resources, Fleet and Open Spaces & Streetscene
Contact Officer:	Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Space & Streetscene & Orla Maguire, Biodiversity Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To inform members of the committee that in July 2025, Belfast City Council, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife, has been awarded £850,514 through the Nature Towns and Cities initiative, a UK-wide programme led by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Natural England, and the National Trust.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree to the signing of the letter of offer and to note that a further report would be submitted for approval outlining the scope of the project.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b>Background and Context</b>
3.1	In October 2024, invitations were issued for local authorities and other partners to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for funding to build capacity and partnerships, peer networks to share learning and practical solutions and schemes to attract new investment.

	<p>The total funding pot across the UK is £15 million with a funding limit of £250,000 - £1,000,000 per application.</p>
3.2	<p>Ulster Wildlife in partnership with BCC and other key stakeholders submitted an Expression of Interest. The National Lottery Heritage Fund received 276 EoIs with a total ask of £170 million. Across the UK 37 projects were successful at the EOI stage, 3 in NI including the Belfast bid.</p>
3.3	<p>In July 2025 the project was awarded £850,514 through the initiative. This is 92% of the total approved Project cost of £924,418, with in kind contributions from BCC and Ulster Wildlife totalling £73,904 (£59,531 BCC and £14,373 UW ) made up of in kind staff time to manage the project and oversee recruitment.. A project overview is provided below. A more detailed report will be brought back to committee demonstrating how this project will fit into the overall Biodiversity programme over the next three years, along with further detail on resourcing and governance.</p> <p><u>Project overview:</u></p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife and other key stakeholders, will develop a shared, co-designed vision and associated set of plans and mechanisms for nature's recovery for the city of Belfast and key surrounding areas, including Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Belfast Hills. The project will build on existing initiatives, such as the Future of Northern Ireland's Urban Green Spaces' report, work undertaken on Nature Recovery Networks (NRNS) and Belfast 2024.</p>
3.5	<p>The Project has four key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The current evidence base will be strengthened through evaluating existing datasets, identifying gaps and shortfalls. An online GIS/mapping platform will spatially map all existing and proposed nature and climate projects, using the ArcGIS package. Work on Biodiversity Net Gain readiness will also be commissioned.</li> <li>2. Across existing green and blue spaces, paths towards alternative management practices will be explored to enhance existing parks and open spaces, moving from a horticultural focus to a nature and climate emphasis.</li> <li>3. Opportunities will be explored to 'green the grey' within the built environment, focussing on areas of need under the Belfast Equal Justice Initiative. This will be achieved by implementing the use of Nature-based Solutions, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to design proposals to better connect nature and people. A best practice guidance document with recommendations for opportunities across Belfast will be produced.</li> <li>4. The project will evaluate corporate investment opportunities and bolster volunteer sustainability and capacity building through evaluating need, developing training and related upskilling opportunities to enhance organisational sustainability.</li> </ol>

3.6	<p><b>Finance and Resource implications</b></p> <p>Provision has been made within the project to cover staffing requirements associated with this project. Resources are available within existing budgets to cover the in kind costs associated with project oversight and recruitment.</p>
3.7	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>There are no known equality or good relations implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>Appendix A - Letter of Offer Appendix B - Supporting Information</p>

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	DAERA Funding Award and Update on the NoM on Urban Meadows
Date:	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard , Operational Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Space & Streetscene & Orla Maguire, Biodiversity Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To inform members of the committee that in September 2025, Belfast City Council, was awarded £472,000 through the DAERA Challenge Fund and to update Members on progress in implementing the NoM on Urban Meadows.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the DAERA funding and agree to proceed with project implementation on the Urban Meadow sites.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>

<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p><b>Background and Context</b></p> <p>In March 2024, invitations were issued for organisations to submit applications to the DAERA Challenge Fund. The Environmental Impact Priorities are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and Climate Recovery: Building Ecological and Climate Resilience, Landscape, water, habitats, species and earth science condition and extent maintained and improved</li> <li>• Connecting People with the Environment: Connecting with the natural environment, understanding it and taking action to have a positive effect on it</li> </ul> <p>Council officers submitted an application in March on Nature Recovery and a letter of offer was received in September.</p> <p>The project objective is to develop a landscape scale Nature Recovery Network across Belfast increasing habitat extent, condition and connectivity for nature and people. Conservation Management Plans will be developed for key BCC sites and habitat enhancement plans for a suite of sites across Belfast. A public awareness campaign and training will be undertaken for staff and stakeholders. Opportunities to create demonstration sites and share knowledge will be identified.</p> <p>The total project cost is £522,500 with delivery up to 31 March 2028. As the project develops further reports will be brought to Committee for update.</p> <p><u>Notice of Motion on Urban Wildflower Meadows</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that in September 2023 Council agreed to a pilot project that aimed to identify one site for a wildflower meadow in each quadrant of the city. A bid for £50,000 was secured as part of the 2025/2026 estimates to support delivery of this initiative.</p> <p>Officers have undertaken a series of actions and identified a preferred site for each quadrant of the city. A workshop was undertaken with OSSS Managers and a long list created. Following site visits to assess ecological benefits, viability and securing indicative costings the following sites have emerged as the preferred option per quadrant.</p>
--	--

3.8	<p>North: Glencairn Park  South: Ormeau Park  East: Belmont Park  West: Brook Leisure Centre</p>
3.9	<p>Site prioritisation is based on ecological, community and education benefits along with feasibility and resourcing.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Finance and Resource implications</b>  <u><b>DAERA Funding</b></u>  There is a requirement of £50,000 match funding from BCC as part of the DAERA funding. This has been identified within existing budgets.</p>
3.11	<p><u><b>Urban Meadows NoM</b></u>  The indicative site costs for interventions are just under the £50,000 budget secured within the 2025/2026 estimates.</p>
3.12	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>  There are no known equality or good relations implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Letter of Offer  Appendix 2 - Urban Meadow Maps</p>

This page is intentionally left blank