



2 May 2024

Committee Chair: Alderman L Clarke

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor M Stewart

Committee Members: Aldermen – L Boyle, P Bradley and P Michael

Councillors – M Brady, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan,
S Flanagan, N Kelly, H Magill, E McLaughlin, L O'Hagan,
A O'Lone and B Webb.

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre** on **Wednesday 8 May 2024** at **6.30 pm**.

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Baker".

Richard Baker GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the Café from 5.20pm

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301/028 9034 0107

Email: memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
WEDNESDAY 8 MAY 2024**

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE BEST PRACTICE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present an update on Managing Attendance.

2. Introduction/Background

The Director of Corporate Strategy, Helen Hall will deliver a presentation on Managing Attendance.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared and Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 FI/ICT/4 PRINT ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the updated Print Acceptable Usage Policy (enclosed**) following some minor changes.**

2. Introduction

The existing Print Acceptable Usage Policy has been in existence since 2015 following RPA. The proposed changes to the existing policy focus on removing the use of personal desktop printers, with an encouragement for all staff to make use of the Multi-Function Devices (Photocopiers) that are in place throughout Council facilities.

The rationale behind this proposed changes are as follows:

- Multi-function Devices offer a secure, PIN based print, scan and copy solution that prevents users from printing unnecessarily and reduces the possibility of printing and leaving confidential material on a printer.
- The use of Multi-function Devices and the associated secure print software solution, allows for accurate print usage to be monitored. This data improves our decision making capabilities around the performance and capacity of the available print facilities.
- Desktop printing is considerably more expensive and requires a range of toners to be purchased for various models of printers. £10,000 has been removed from the 24/25 ICT budget which had previously been allocated against printing and toner costs.
- The toners associated with desktop printing creates a significant amount of waste, therefore this policy aims to assist Council in meeting its sustainability objectives.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the updated Print Acceptable Usage Policy.

Prepared and Agreed by: Graham Smyth, Head of ICT

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

4.2 F1/FIN/10 AMENDMENT TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend the approval of the updated financial regulations.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that Council regularly review the Financial Regulations to ensure a high level of governance is in place in relation to financial activity. Amendments to the financial regulations were last approved in December 2022.

The Financial Regulations form part of the Financial Framework of Council which provides the necessary control on financial matters, whilst encouraging best practice and promoting local accountability.

The Financial Regulations provide a through which the Chief Executive can be satisfied that proper financial administration is in place. The aim of these Regulations is to help ensure that high standards of propriety and best value are achieved. All Elected Members and employees have a duty to promote these aims, not just by following Financial Regulations but in their general approach.

3. Review of the Regulations

Following review, a number of amendments have been drafted and are summarised below:

Section	Amendment
Section 6	Updates to the Economic Appraisal/Business case process.
Section 7	Updates to purchase order and expenditure monitoring and review.
Section 9	Updates to contract management arrangements.
Section 26	Updates to Internal Audit.
All sections	Updates to job titles, legislative references and Codes of Best Practice as required.

A copy of the proposed updated Financial Regulations is **enclosed** for approval.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the updated Financial Regulations be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.3 G/LEG/044 STANDING ORDERS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval of the minutes as a true and accurate record of the second meeting of the Standing Orders Working Group on 21 March 2024.

2. Background

Following the decision to conduct a review of the Standing Orders at the December 2023 Policy and Governance Committee, Members agreed to the establishment of a Working Group (task and finish) to review Council's current Standing Orders.

The purpose of the Working Group, consisting of Members and relevant Officers, is to make recommendations, on a task and finish principle, to the Policy and Governance Committee in relation to the revision of the Council's Standing Orders to make them relevant to the current modern governance arrangements.

The second meeting of the group took place on 21 March 2024.

3. Outcome

A copy of the minutes of the second meeting of the Standing Orders Working Group is **enclosed** for Members' consideration. These minutes were reviewed by the Standing Orders Working Group at the third meeting held on 25 April 2024.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of the second meeting of the Standing Orders Working Group on 21 March 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.4 CCS/GEN/007 SUMMER SCHEME GRANT FUNDING AND INCLUSIVE SUMMER SCHEME UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the arrangements and costs associated with the Summer Scheme Funding and Inclusive Summer Scheme.

2. Introduction/Background

Special Educational Needs (SEN) - Summer Scheme Grant Funding

Members are reminded that annually the Council provides grant funding of up to £5000 to each of the 5 Special Schools in the Borough, to support equitable access to Summer Schemes and Programmes across the Borough for children and young people with special needs.

We would propose that this continues and the grant funding is again offered to the Special Schools in the Borough to ensure uptake and sustainability. The Schools will again be required to submit a proposal detailing their plans to utilise the grant funding. The Accessibility and Inclusion Officer will contact the Schools to encourage uptake of this funding.

Council Inclusive Summer Scheme

Following the continued success of the Inclusive Summer Scheme in 2023 at the Antrim Forum, Lilian Bland and Crumlin Leisure Centre and evaluation feedback from parents, it is proposed that we provide this scheme for summer 2024 in partnership with the Mae Murray Foundation.

The Scheme provides specialised one to one care for up to 25 children (per day) with complex disabilities/medical conditions and a range of activities tailored to their specific needs such as inclusive wheelchair games, sensory play as well as arts and crafts and guest facilitators.

The Mae Murray Foundation has limited availability for 2024 due to this it is proposed that we run our scheme over two weeks for five days each week. The provisional dates for this are week commencing 1 July 2024 and 5 August 2024. Booking for the scheme will be advertised in advance on 10 May 2024 to allow for personal care assessments to be carried out. The proposed preferred venues based on feedback from the Mae Murray Foundation and parents are Antrim Forum Leisure Centre and the Crumlin Leisure Centre subject to availability.

3. Financial Position/Implication

The costs associated with this are as follows and will be met within current budgets:

Item/Duration	Costs
Mae Murray Foundation personal care support and volunteers X 10 Days 11am – 2pm	£16,670
Scheme Activity Providers X 10 Days 11am – 2pm	£4000
Total	£20,670

1. £25,000 for the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Summer Schemes
2. £20,670 for the Council Inclusive Summer Schemes

Both of these schemes have been budgeted within the Accessibility and Inclusion Budget.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) **The Council continues to provide up to £5000 grant funding to the 5 Special Educational Needs Schools in the Borough to deliver their Inclusive Summer Scheme Programme.**
- b) **The proposed Inclusive Summer Scheme costs of £20,670 be approved.**

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.5 HR/ER/001 HR/HR/01 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request approval for four revised HR Policies (1.Career Break, 2.Marriage/Civil Partnership Leave, 3.Dependants Leave, 4.Dignity & Respect at Work) and the introduction of two new HR Policies (5.Menopause, 6.Foster/Kinship), for implementation for all staff with immediate effect.

2. Main Report

In consultation with the Trade Unions, the following policies are now presented to Members for approval and immediate implementation for all staff (**enclosed** at Appendix 1-6).

Revised Policies:

1. Career Break Policy
2. Marriage/Civil Partnership Leave Policy
3. Dependants Leave Policy
4. Dignity & Respect at Work Policy

New Policies:

5. Menopause Policy
6. Foster Kinship Leave Policy

3. Governance

All policies have been equality screened, as detailed in Appendix 7 (**enclosed**).

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the four revised HR Policies (1.Career Break, 2.Marriage/Civil Partnership Leave, 3.Dependants Leave, 4.Dignity & Respect at Work) and the introduction of two new HR Policies (5.Menopause, 6.Foster/Kinship) be approved and implemented for all staff with immediate effect.

Prepared by: Pauline Greer, Lead HR Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.6 G/HSWB/004 UPDATED SMOKE AND VAPE FREE POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the reviewed and updated Smoke and Vape Free Policy.

2. Introduction/Background

The prohibition of Smoking within Council Buildings was addressed in Council's H&S Policy (2015), but not vaping as vaping is a relatively new practice.

The Smoke and Vape Free Policy was first approved by the Policy & Governance Committee in November 2021. It sets out the requirements by law in regards to smoking and the prohibition of vaping along with Council arrangements for the provision of designated smoking areas.

3. Key Issues

- The policy has been reviewed (**enclosed**) and no changes to the content have been deemed necessary.
- The policy has had minor amendments to accommodate title changes and to match the updated requirements within the Policy Framework, i.e. Version Control table at the rear.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the updated Smoke and Vape Free Policy.

Prepared by: Elaine Girvan, Head of Health, Safety and Resilience

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on Councils prompt payment performance.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that the Department for Communities (DfC) issued revised guidance (Local Government Circular 19/2016) on prompt payments and the recording of invoice payments in November 2016. This guidance requested Councils to record specific performance targets of 10 working days and 30 calendar days and continue a cycle of quarterly reporting on prompt payment performance by Councils to the DfC and its publication on their website.

3. Prompt Payment Performance

The Council's prompt payment performance for the period **1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024** is set out below:

The default target for paying invoices, where no other terms are agreed, is 30 days.

(N.B. 30 days target is 30 calendar days and 10 days is 10 working days).

During the above period, the Council paid invoices totalling £14,515,434

The Council paid 5,034 invoices within the 30-day target. (87%)

The Council paid 4,333 invoices within the 10-day target. (75%)

The Council paid 742 invoices outside of the 30-day target. (13%)

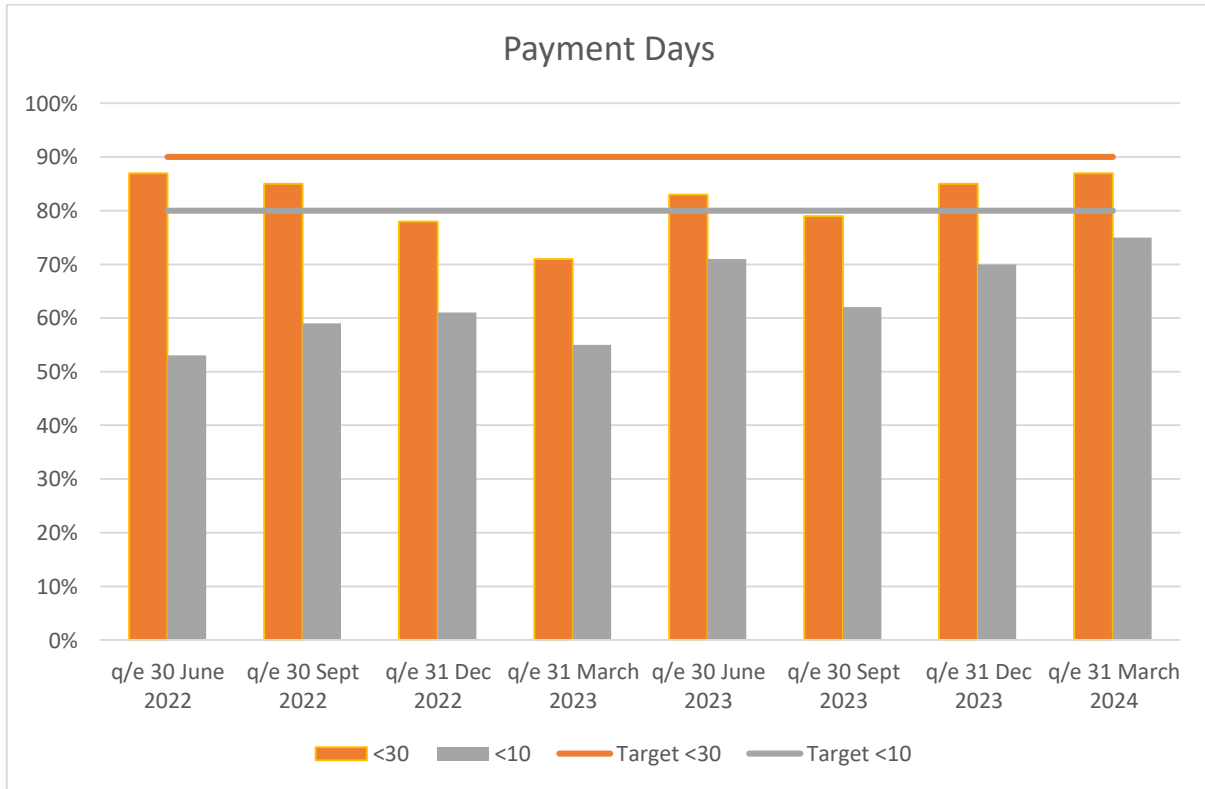
The Council has set a target of paying 90% of invoices within 30 days and 80% within 10 days.

This compares to previous quarterly results as below:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 30 June 2022	4,254	87%	53%
q/e 30 September 2022	6,090	85%	59%
q/e 31 December 2022	5,780	78%	61%
q/e 31 March 2023	5,558	71%	55%
q/e 30 June 2023	7,050	83%	71%
q/e 30 September 2023	6,498	79%	62%
q/e 31 December 2023	7,074	85%	70%

q/e 31 March 2024	5,776	87%	75%
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The performance presented graphically highlights the performance metrics for the above.



The table and graph above show the performance over the last two years. In comparison with the previous quarter, performance levels have improved for both the 30-day figure and 10-day figure.

The RAG weekly status report shows the improvement in Quarter 4 and into Quarter 1:

Period	No of invoices	% Paid Within 10 Days	11-30Days	30plus days	% Paid Within 30 Days
31/12/2023 - 04/01/2024	517	76%	16%	8%	92%
07/01/2024 - 13/01/2024	429	72%	19%	10%	90%
14/01/2024 - 17/01/2024	461	69%	13%	18%	82%
21/01/2024 - 27/01/2024	569	73%	11%	15%	85%
28/01/2024 - 03/02/2024	468	84%	5%	11%	89%
04/02/2024 - 10/02/2024	372	77%	8%	15%	85%
11/02/2024 - 17/02/2024	404	65%	11%	24%	76%
18/02/2024 - 24/02/2024	411	77%	12%	11%	89%
25/02/2024 - 02/03/2024	452	64%	21%	15%	85%
03/03/2024 - 09/03/2024	420	85%	7%	9%	91%
10/03/2024 - 16/03/2024	415	84%	7%	9%	91%
17/03/2024 - 23/03/2024	311	71%	22%	6%	94%
24/03/2024 - 29/03/2024	486	74%	9%	16%	84%
01/04/2024 - 06/04/2024	457	77%	13%	9%	91%

There is now a full complement of staff within the Finance section and work is ongoing with all departments to make further improvements. Service improvements have included:

- Additional reporting capability to monitor performance
- Staff training/refresher sessions
- Process review for high volume suppliers

The prompt payment performance for Councils in Northern Ireland is published quarterly by the Department for Communities (DfC). The prompt payment performance for the quarter ended 31 December 2023 is shown in Appendix 1 **enclosed**; the Council's performance for Quarter 4 against the average performance for the other Councils for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (Quarter 4 23/24)	87%	75%
All Councils (Quarter 3 23/24)	91%	72%

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.2 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – QUARTER 4 APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide financial performance information at quarter four (April 2023 – March 2024) for Finance and Governance, Organisation Development and Council.

2. Introduction

As agreed at the August Council meeting, quarterly budget reports will be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group. All financial reports will be available to all Members.

3. Summary

The overall financial position of the Council is presented to the Policy & Governance Committee.

The budget report for Period 12 does not include adjustments required to arrive at the final financial position of the Council for the 2023/24 financial year. These adjustments include final accruals of expenditure incurred and grants and debts invoiced after 31 March 2024, contributions to or from reserves, and prepayments of expenditure and income.

Budget reports for Finance and Governance, Organisational Development, and the Overall Council Financial Performance for Quarter 4 – April 2023 to March 2024 are **enclosed** for Members' information.

At period 12 the Finance & Governance budget is showing a favourable variance of £28k largely attributable to vacant posts in the Risk & Governance section.

At period 12 the Organisation Development budget is showing an unfavourable variance of £110k, this is mainly due to employee costs.

The overall position of the Council at the end of the fourth quarter is an unfavourable variance on the net cost of services of £2.86m. Taking into account the credit balance application used in striking the rates results in an overall decrease to the general fund of £4.79m.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

5.3 HR/HR/019 AGENCY UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the engagement of agency workers across the Council for March 2024.

2. Background

Agency workers are engaged to provide temporary cover for absence such as:

- Maternity leave
- Secondments
- Sickness absence
- Vacant posts
- Seasonal events

Recruitment exercises are ongoing to fill a number of vacant positions, which will further reduce our reliance on agency workers. While the Council is committed to minimising the dependency on agency cover, it may on occasions be the most appropriate and prudent method of recruitment.

3. Use of Agency Workers

The engagement of agency workers is subject to a rigorous approval process, which includes the approval of the Corporate Leadership Team.

The use of agency workers in March 2024 compared to March 2023 is **enclosed** at Appendix 1. It should be noted that there is a significant decrease in the number of agency workers in March 2024 (20) compared to March 2023 (54).

4. Finance

The expenditure on agency workers in March 2024 is **enclosed** at Appendix 2, which represents 6% (of all staff costs) for the period April 2023 to March 2024.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the update on the engagement of agency workers across the Council for March 2024 be noted.

Prepared by: Pamela Boyd, Human Resources Officer

Agreed by: Pauline Greer, Lead HR Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Deputy Director of Corporate Strategy

5.4 OD/OD/002 ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027 - LAUNCH EVENT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members that the launch of the Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2023-2027 will be held on Tuesday 11 June 2024, at the Theatre at the Mill.

2. Background

The Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2023-2027 (**enclosed** at Appendix 1) was approved in February 2024. The Elected Member Development Working Group proposed that a launch event be arranged and a copy of the draft Agenda is **enclosed** at Appendix 2 for information. Diary invites will be issued in due course.

3. Financial Implication

The launch event will be met within existing budgets.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the launch of the Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2023-2027 on Tuesday 11 June 2024 at Theatre at the Mill be noted.

Prepared by: Sarah Fenton, Organisation Development Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development and Employee Engagement Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy