



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ROUND CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON
TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Councillor A O'Lone
Members Present (In person)	:	Aldermen – L Clarke and J Smyth Councillors – A Bennington, J Burbank, M Cooper, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan, H Magill, E McLaughlin and L O'Hagan
Members Present (Remote)	:	Aldermen – L Boyle and P Bradley Councillor – A McAuley
Non Committee Member: (Remote)	:	Councillor R Lynch
Also in Attendance (In person)	:	Fiona Douglas, Regional Development Manager, NILGA Tony Bovaird, Chief Executive, Governance International
Officers Present (In person)	:	Chief Executive – R Baker Director of Finance and Governance – S Cole Deputy Director of Governance – L Johnston Head of Finance – R Murray ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson Member Services Officer – C McIntyre
Officers Present (Remote)	:	Head of Organisation Development – L Millar Lead Human Resources Manager (Interim) – P Greer

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone, including the presenters, to the November Meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee, and reminded all present of recording requirements.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor V McWilliam

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6.1 – Councillor J Burbank

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 G/MSMO/142 NILGA LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Chairperson welcomed Fiona Douglas, Regional Development Manager, NILGA and Tony Bovaird, Chief Executive, Governance International to the meeting.

They provided details on the CPD-accredited Leadership Programme for Elected Members (presentation circulated) offered by NILGA in conjunction with Governance International, as part of NILGA's Regional Programme for Elected Member Development.

A Member's query was addressed concerning scheduling and a hybrid approach to delivery of the Programme.

As Chairperson of NILGA, Councillor Bennington commended the course to Members.

The Chairperson thanked Fiona Douglas and Tony Bovaird for their presentation and they left the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

NO ACTION

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend that the Dual Language Street Sign applications at stage 1 be noted and approved, that an application at stage 2 be noted (there were no applications at stage 3).

2. Background

In accordance with the Dual Language Street Sign Policy, adopted by Council on 30 May 2022 (circulated), the following update outlined the current status of applications received.

3. Application Update

STAGE 1: PETITION VERIFICATION

Three applications had been received at stage 1.

- (a) BALLYTROMERY AVENUE, CRUMLIN, BT29 4ZN
- (b) CAMLIN PARK, CRUMLIN, BT29 4HE

Officers were scheduled to visit the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland week commencing 28 October 2024 to verify the petitions for the above applications. The verification outcome would be reported to the December Policy and Governance Committee.

- (c) LONGLANDS ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7LU

The occupiers signing the petition had been evidenced by their listing on the current Electoral Register and had met the one third threshold as required within the approved Policy.

STAGE 2: RESIDENTS CANVASS

One application had been received at stage 2.

- (a) OLD MILL DRIVE, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7XP

Canvass letters had been issued to residents on 4 October 2024 for return by 1 November 2024. The canvass outcome would be reported to the December Policy and Governance Committee.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION

There were no applications at stage 3.

The Head of Organisation Development agreed to consider the provision of maps in respect of future applications.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Dual Language Street Sign applications at:

- (a) Stage 1 Ballytromery Avenue, Crumlin, BT29 4ZN and Camlin Park, Crumlin, BT29 4ZN be noted and Longlands Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7LU be approved;**
- (b) Stage 2 Old Mill Drive, Newtownabbey, BT36 7XP be noted; and**
- (c) Stage 3 No applications at stage 3 be noted.**

ACTION BY: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer and Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

4.2 G/IG/7 REVIEW OF DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members to approve the review of the Data Protection Policy in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework.

2. Introduction/Background

The Data Protection Policy had been reviewed in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework and schedule. The policy was last reviewed in September 2022 (two year review cycle).

3. Key Issues

The review had identified a number of minor amendments as being required:

- update regarding changes in job titles
- request forms updated to reflect change in Council structure.

These amendments had been made to the circulated draft of the policy. The reviewed policy had been approved by CLT.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the review of the Data Protection Policy in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework be approved.

ACTION BY: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

4.3 HR/ER/024 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENTS 2024/25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members to note and apply the Local Government Services Pay Agreements for 2024/25.

2. Local Government Pay Agreements 2024/25

The circulated correspondence from NILGA outlined the 2024/25 pay agreements that had been reached for period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 31 2025.

- JNC for Chief Officers: A 2.5% salary increase effective 1 April 2024.
- JNC for Chief Executives: A 2.5% salary increase effective 1 April 2024.
- NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book) Employees: The new pay rates increased by £1,290 per annum. All locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine, but below Deputy Chief Officer, would receive a 2.5% increase in line with Green Book provisions.

3. Financial Position/Implication

Provision for the pay awards had been provided for within the 2024/25 estimates.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance and Governance agreed to provide detailed costings, when available, to Members.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed that

the Local Government Services Pay Agreements for 2024/25 be noted and applied.

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy (Interim) and Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – QUARTER 2 APRIL 2024 TO SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide financial performance information at period 6 (April 2024 – September 2024) for Finance and Governance, Organisation Development and Council.

2. Introduction/Background

As agreed, quarterly budget reports would be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group. All financial reports would be available to all

Members.

3. Summary

The overall financial position of the Council would be presented to the Policy and Governance Committee.

Budget reports for Finance and Governance, Organisational Development, and the Overall Council Financial Performance for Quarter 2 April 2024 to September 2024 were circulated for Members' information.

At period 6 the Finance and Governance budget was showing a favourable variance of £317k largely attributable to additional interest received from VAT Special Legal Regime, vacant posts and additional grant funding for revenue expenditure.

At period 6 the Organisation Development budget had shown a favourable variance of £29k.

The overall position of the Council at the end of quarter 2 was a favourable variance on the net cost of services of £249k.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance and Governance agreed to consider whether the budget setting process should be equality screened.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.2 FC/FA/8 MID-YEAR REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS & TREASURY MANAGEMENT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide a mid-year review of the Council's Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management activities for the 2024/25 financial year for noting.

2. Introduction

Council measured and managed its capital expenditure, borrowings and investment activities with reference to the CIPFA Prudential Code. This report provided an update on these activities which had taken place during the first six months of the 2024/25 financial year.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

Council approved the Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 to 2026/2027 and the Treasury Management Strategies for 2024/25 in February 2024.

Under the Prudential Code and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services the Council would be required to monitor and review its prudential indicators. The key objective of which would be to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council were affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Council's Treasury Management Policy required mid-year and annual reports on treasury management activities.

This report compared the approved Prudential Indicators with the mid-year position for 2024/25 and the mid-year report on the Council's borrowing and investment activities for 2024/25.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 G/IG/7 REVIEW OF POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the review of the Policy Framework.

2. Introduction/Background

The Policy Framework, which provided policy authors with guidance and templates to review policies and procedures regularly, had been reviewed.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval of the Policy Framework had been made by the Policy and Governance Committee in June 2021 and reviewed in September 2023.

4. Key Issues

A template for policies had been included in the Framework, but the term policy had been applied widely in accordance with the Equality Commission definition which also included strategies, however, the template was not appropriate for strategies.

The Policy Framework had been amended to include the following definitions:

A policy set out agreed guidelines on a given subject in order to provide

consistent and informed actions over the long term.

A procedure or process set out the steps to be performed to deliver a policy.

A strategy was a time-bound plan intended to achieve specific goals or objectives. It should have an accompanying action plan to organise and monitor activities adopted to implement the strategy.

The Framework had also been amended to state that the template provided related to policies only.

These amendments had been made to the circulated draft of the Policy Framework.

5. Governance

It was essential that the Council had a suite of up-to-date policies/procedures which were being reviewed on a regular basis.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hagan

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the review of the Policy Framework be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 **G/DPFI/2 QUARTERLY REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members on the Quarter 2 statistics relating to FOI/EIR/DPA Requests.

2. Introduction/Background

A report had been prepared on requests received in the second quarter of the year (1 July to 30 September 2024) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) (circulated).

3. Summary

A summary of the quarter's statistics was as follows:

- The number of requests received were slightly higher than the number in the same period the previous year – an increase of 5%.
- Of the 111 requests received, 76 were under FOI, 28 under EIR and 7 under DPA.
- 91 requests were completed within the quarter.

- 100% of the requests received within the quarter were completed within the legislative deadlines of 20 days for FOI and EIR requests and a calendar month for requests made under DPA.
- The sections that received the most requests in the quarter were Environmental Health (32), Planning (21), Finance (21) and Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events (20).
- Two appeals were received during the quarter; in both of these appeals the Council's original decisions were upheld.
- One complaint to the ICO was notified within the quarter; a response was provided to the ICO by the deadline of 10 October and their decision is awaited.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove

Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the Quarter 2 statistics relating to FOI/EIR/DPA Requests be noted.

NO ACTION

Councillor Cosgrove left the Chamber during Item 7.1.

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 7.1** In response to Members' concerns over the opportunity for consideration of items of Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) within Committees, the Chief Executive along with the Director of Finance and Governance explained the detail of Standing Orders Item 7(5) indicating that this would continue as a standing Agenda Item for all Committees allowing AORB to be raised. However prior notice of an item of AORB does allow the relevant Officer to prepare a researched response.

ACTION BY: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Bennington

Seconded by Councillor Cushinan and agreed

that the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease at this point.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN-CONFIDENCE HR/GEN/004 CHRISTMAS EVE 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members to approve a half day for Christmas Eve 2024 for all Council staff.

2. Background

Historically, legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council staff had been awarded a half day for Christmas Eve.

When Christmas Eve fell on a Saturday or Sunday, the half day was taken on the preceding Friday.

Where it was not possible to close the service early, a half day leave in lieu was awarded, to be taken by agreement at a later date.

3. Previous Decision of the Council

Since 2015, Members had approved the half day Christmas Eve arrangement for all Council staff.

Members were requested to consider to grant the same arrangement this year, to be taken where service allowed, on Tuesday 24 December 2024.

The Director of Finance and Governance responded to a Member's query in relation to the regularisation of this arrangement within terms and conditions.

Proposed by Councillor Magill

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

a half day for Christmas Eve 2024 for all Council staff be approved.

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy (Interim)

Having declared an interest in Item 6.2, Councillor Burbank left the Chamber at this point.

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE OD/OD/002 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note the minutes of the Elected Member Development Working Group and to approve a Continuous Professional Development Application which was in line with policy requirements.

2. Background

A meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group had taken place on Monday 28 October 2024.

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting were circulated for Members' information.

3. Continuous Professional Development Policy

In April 2023, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council introduced its Elected Member Continuous Professional Development Policy, enabling Elected Members to access:

- Full coverage of part-time study costs (up to degree level)
- An annual individual development allowance of £800 (£3200 per term)
- 75% funding for approved CPD applications

Members could use their individual budget towards any professional or academic development programs.

4. Continuous Professional Development Application

The Elected Member Development Working Group reviewed an application for part time study on 28 October 2024, assessing it against the policy, and recommended it for approval.

5. Cost implications

There were no additional cost implications and the request could be met in line with current budget expenditure.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance and Governance agreed to consider the recording of Applicant's details within Elected Member Development Working Group Minutes.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

(a) the Minutes of the Elected Member Development Working Group meeting held on Monday 28 October 2024 be noted; and

(b) the Elected Member Continuous Professional Development Application be approved.

ACTION BY: Sarah Fenton, Organisation Development Officer and Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

Councillor Burbank returned to the Chamber.

The Chief Executive left the Chamber at this point.

6.3 **IN-CONFIDENCE** HR/HR/044 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INDUCTION PROGRAMME, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL PROCESS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the successful completion of the Chief Executive's probationary period be noted which included completion of the induction programme, performance management and appraisal process, thereby confirming the permanent appointment to the position of Chief Executive of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy (Interim)

The Chief Executive returned to the Chamber.

6.4 IN CONFIDENCE HR/HR/027 ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend the extension of the date for Voluntary Severance of the Director of Corporate Strategy (Interim) to support the Human Resource/Organisation Development Directorate.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the extension of the date for Voluntary Severance of the Interim Director of Corporate Strategy to 31 December 2025, if required, be approved in order to support the Human Resource/Organisation Development Directorate.

ACTION BY: Pauline Greer, Lead Human Resources Manager (Interim)

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Cushman
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

that the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.24pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.