



30 January 2025

Committee Chairperson: Councillor A O'Lone

Committee Vice-Chairperson: Alderman L Boyle

Committee Members: Aldermen – P Bradley, L Clarke and J Smyth

Councillors – A Bennington, J Burbank, M Cooper, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan, H Magill, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, V McWilliam and L O'Hagan

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 Tuesday 4 February 2025 at 6.30pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

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
memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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- 3.1 Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2027/28
- 3.2 Treasury Management Strategy
- 3.3 Capital Strategy
- 3.4 Report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves
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- 3.9 Elected Member and Officer Leadership Conference 2025 – Hold the Date, Wednesday 26 March 2025

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**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2025**

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 FI/FA/7 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO 2027/28

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide updates and obtain approvals on the Council's future financial planning (and treasury management activities) as required by the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Background

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011

Members are reminded that under the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Prudential Code, the Council is required to have regard to a number of reports and to approve a range of indicators and strategies prior to the prescribed date for striking the rates, 15 February 2025.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO 2027/28

The Prudential Code requires the council to develop three-year revenue forecasts and three-year capital expenditure plans. These are shown in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2027/28, a copy of which is enclosed.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2027/28 be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

3.2 FI/FA/8 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide updates and obtain approvals on the Council's future financial planning (and treasury management activities) as required by the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Background

The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the council, in carrying out its capital finance functions, to have regard to the current editions of the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes and the Prudential Code.

The Council is therefore required to set out its Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy which sets out the council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

Copies of the above policy and strategies are **enclosed**.

3. Recommendation:

It is recommended that

- a) the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 be approved**
- b) the Annual Investment Strategy 2025/26 be approved**

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

3.3 FI/FA/5 CAPITAL STRATEGY

1. Purpose

The Prudential Code requires the Council to develop a Capital Strategy which provides a high-level overview of the long-term context of capital expenditure and investment decisions and their associated risks and rewards along with an overview of how risk is managed for future financial sustainability.

A copy of the Capital strategy is **enclosed**.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Capital Strategy 2025/26 be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

3.4 FI/FA/9 REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER ON THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ensure robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves for the next financial year.

2. Background

Section 4 and 6 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council to have regard to a report, a copy of which is **enclosed**, from the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of the Reserves be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

3.5 G/IG/7 SECURE DESK POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the updated Secure Desk Policy and obtain approval in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework.

2. Introduction/Background

The Secure Desk Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework and schedule. The policy was last reviewed in January 2023 (two-year review cycle).

3. Key Issue

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

- Deputy Director of Governance job title updated.
- Section 5-8 strengthened regarding Data Breach Notification
- Contact details for Policy amended

These amendments have been made to the **enclosed** draft of the policy.

The reviewed policy has been approved by CLT.

4. Governance

It is essential that the Council has a suite of up-to-date policies/procedures which are reviewed on a regular basis.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the updated Secure Desk Policy in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework be approved.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

3.6 HR/ER/002 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION CONTINUING OPERATIONS 2025/26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the Local Government Staff Commission continuing apportionment arrangements of £23,662 for 2025/26.

2. Previous Decision of the Council

Members are reminded that the Department for Communities previously informed the Commission that it had extended the provisional date for dissolution to 31 March 2027.

In May 2024, the Council agreed to write to the Department for Communities Minister asking for a review of the decision to extend the date of dissolution and reiterate that the Commission should be wound up immediately, however there was no response to this correspondence.

3. Apportionment Arrangements 2025/26

Correspondence (**enclosed**) has been received from the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) confirming the apportionment arrangements for 2025/26.

The Department for Communities has informed the Commission that they have no new information in relation to the Dissolution Order to wind up the Commission and as such, in order to implement its statutory functions, it is necessary for the Commission to determine a financial scheme up to 31 March 2026.

In accordance with the 2025/26 Management and Dissolution Plan, the Commission has estimated its total financial requirement to be £427,924 for the year ahead. Income from ongoing operations, which is offset against this figure is estimated at £40,000, leaving an amount of £387,924 to be raised from District Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

By virtue of the apportionment arrangements, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is required to pay 6.1% of £387,924, namely £23,662.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Local Government Staff Commission continuing apportionment arrangements of £23,662 for 2025/26 be approved.

Prepared and Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Organisation Development (Interim)

3.7 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve Dual Language Street Sign applications as follows:

Stage 1 – There are no applications at Stage 1.

Stage 2

- Longlands Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 7NE, be noted.
- Ballytromery Avenue, Crumlin, BT29 4ZN, be noted.
- Camlin Park, Crumlin, BT29 4HE, be noted.

Stage 3

- Longlands Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7LU, be approved.

2. Background

Members are reminded that in accordance with the Dual Language Street Sign Policy, adopted by Council on 30 May 2022, enclosed at Appendix 1, the following update outlines the current status of applications received.

3. Application Update

STAGE 1: PETITION VERIFICATION

There are no applications at Stage 1.

STAGE 2: RESIDENTS CANVASS

Three applications have progressed to Stage 2.

1. BALLYTROMERY AVENUE, CRUMLIN, BT29 4ZN
2. CAMLIN PARK, CRUMLIN, BT29 4HE
3. LONGLANDS AVENUE, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 7NE

Canvass letters have been issued to residents of the above streets with January and February return dates. The outcome will be reported to Members in due course.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION

One application has progressed to Stage 3.

1. LONGLANDS ROAD, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 7LU

The occupiers of the above street have been canvassed and the threshold of two-thirds or more in favour of the installation of a dual language street sign

has been met. A map and outline costings are **enclosed** at Appendix 2.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Dual Language Street Sign applications at:

Stage 1 -

No applications at Stage 1, be noted.

Stage 2 -

- **Longlands Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 7NE be noted.**
- **Ballytromery Avenue, Crumlin, BT29 4ZN, be noted.**
- **Camlin Park, Crumlin, BT29 4HE, be noted.**

Stage 3 -

- **Longlands Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7LU, be approved.**

Prepared by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Organisation Development (Interim)

3.8 PT/CI/067 CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL AND DEVELOPMENT (CIPD) AWARDS NORTHERN IRELAND 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to note the outcome of Council's submissions to the CIPD Awards in Northern Ireland 2025 and seek approval for attendance at the Awards Ceremony.

2. Background

The CIPD is the professional body for Human Resources and People Management. These prestigious awards celebrate and reward outstanding achievements and contributions made by leading organisations.

3. Award Finalists and Ceremony

The CIPD has announced the shortlist for its 2025 Northern Ireland Awards, recognising more than 30 employers who are leading the way in shaping better work and working lives.

The awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of HR professionals and people teams who play a leading role in delivering workplace initiatives and strategies to better support employees and improve business performance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have been nominated as finalists in the following categories:

- **Best Learning and Development Initiative** – iLead Programme
- **Rising Star of the People Profession** – Katherine Young, Organisation Development & Employee Engagement Manager

Category winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on Thursday 6 March 2025 at the Titanic Belfast.

4. Financial Implications

The cost of attending the Awards Ceremony for a half table of five is £650+vat, which will be met within existing budgets.

5. Attendance

It is proposed that the Mayor and Chair of Policy and Governance Committee, or their nominee, attend along with three Officers from the Organisation Development Team.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) a half table of 5 be reserved at the Awards Ceremony**
- b) the Mayor and Chair of Policy & Governance Committee, or their nominees, attend as an approved duty**
- c) the remaining 3 places be reserved for Officers from the Organisation Development Team**

Prepared by: Allen Templeton Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Organisational Development (interim)

3.9 OD/OD/004 ELECTED MEMBER AND OFFICER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2025 – HOLD THE DATE, WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to invite Members to hold the date for attendance at the inhouse joint Elected Member and Officer Leadership Conference on Wednesday 26 March 2025.

2. Introduction

The Council remains committed to fostering dynamic leadership, a cornerstone of the *Corporate Plan, Elected Member Development Strategy* and the 'iLead' pillar of the Employee Engagement Framework. This proposed leadership conference directly aligns with these commitments and offers an opportunity to enhance leadership skills, share innovative practices, and engage in strategic discussions.

The proposed leadership conference aligns with the Council's strategic priorities by strengthening leadership capacity, enhancing organisational collaboration, and supporting succession planning.

3. Conference Overview

Event Details:

- Date: 26 March 2025
- Venue: Theatre at the Mill
- Participants: Approx. 100 attendees, including Councillors, senior leaders, line managers, and aspiring leaders.

Content Highlights:

- Keynote Speakers to inspire and provide thought leadership.
- Innovation Workshops focusing on:
 - Digital Transformation in Local Government,
 - Multigenerational Leadership,
 - Commercial Thinking, and
 - Cultivating a resilient mindset.
- Networking Opportunities: A platform to foster cross-departmental collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Conference Objectives:

- Equip participants with actionable leadership tools to address key challenges.
- Promote the sharing of knowledge and best practices across the Council.
- Support succession planning through the identification and development of emerging leaders.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members hold Wednesday 26 March 2025 for attendance at this inhouse Leadership Conference, with diary invites to follow.

Prepared by: Sarah Fenton, Organisational Development Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisational Development

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Organisational Development (interim)

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 G/DPFI/2 QUARTERLY REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members on the Quarter 3 statistics relating to FOI/EIR/DPA Requests.

2. Introduction/Background

A report has been prepared on requests received and completed in the third quarter of the year (1 October to 31 December 2024) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this is **enclosed**.

3. Summary

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

- The number of requests received was higher than the number in the same period the previous year – an increase of 12%.
- Of the 102 requests received, 84 were under FOI, 14 under EIR and 4 under DPA.
- 114 requests were completed within the quarter.
- 95% 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 Finance (28), Governance (23), Environmental Health (22) and Estate Services (13).
- Five appeals were received during the quarter. In all of these appeals the Council's original decision was upheld, although the Council was able to provide additional information for two of the responses due to the requesters refining their requests.
- No complaints to the ICO were notified within the quarter. However, two complaints notified in Quarter 1 are still under consideration by the ICO.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the Quarter 3 statistics relating to FOI/EIR/DPA Requests.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.2 G/MSMO/2 CHANGE IN GROUP LEADER FOR SINN FÉIN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Members to note the change in group leader for Sinn Féin.

2. New Nomination

The Chief Executive has received notification from the Sinn Féin General Secretary that Councillor Maighr ad N  Chonghaile will replace Councillor Michael Goodman as the Group Leader for Sinn F in on Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council with immediate effect.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the change in Group Leader for Sinn F in be noted.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance