



3 February 2022

Committee Chair: Alderman P Michael

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor T McGrann

Committee Members: Councillors – M Cooper, H Cushinan, R Foster, S Flanagan, N Kelly, A McAuley, M Magill, B Mallon, N Ramsay, V Robinson, M Stewart, B Webb and R Wilson

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee will be held in **The Council Chamber, Mossley Mill on Tuesday 8 February 2022 at 6.30 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Dixon".

Jacqui Dixon, BSc MBA
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

For any queries please contact Member Services:

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**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022**

3. PRESENTATION

3.1 PRESENTATION – ICT SUPPORTING CORPORATE RECOVERY

Members are advised that the Head of ICT will make a presentation at the meeting.

4. ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 FC/G/002 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members are advised that Ms Gill Cubitt has recently been appointed as Financial Performance Officer within the Finance & Governance department.

It is a requirement of the financial institutions used by Council to formally minute the authorisation given by Council to named officers to transact financial business on the Council's behalf.

RECOMMENDATION: that Ms Gill Cubitt, Financial Performance Officer is authorised:

- a) As a signatory to the Council's bank accounts;**
- b) To submit and approve internet banking transactions;**
- c) To submit and approve Bankers' Automated Clearing Services (BACS) transactions;**
- d) Transact business with Council approved counterparty institutions**

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

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.

The Council's prompt payment performance for the period **1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021** 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 £11,407,946.

The Council paid 5,770 invoices within the 30-day target. (88%)

The Council paid 5,042 invoices within the 10-day target. (77%)

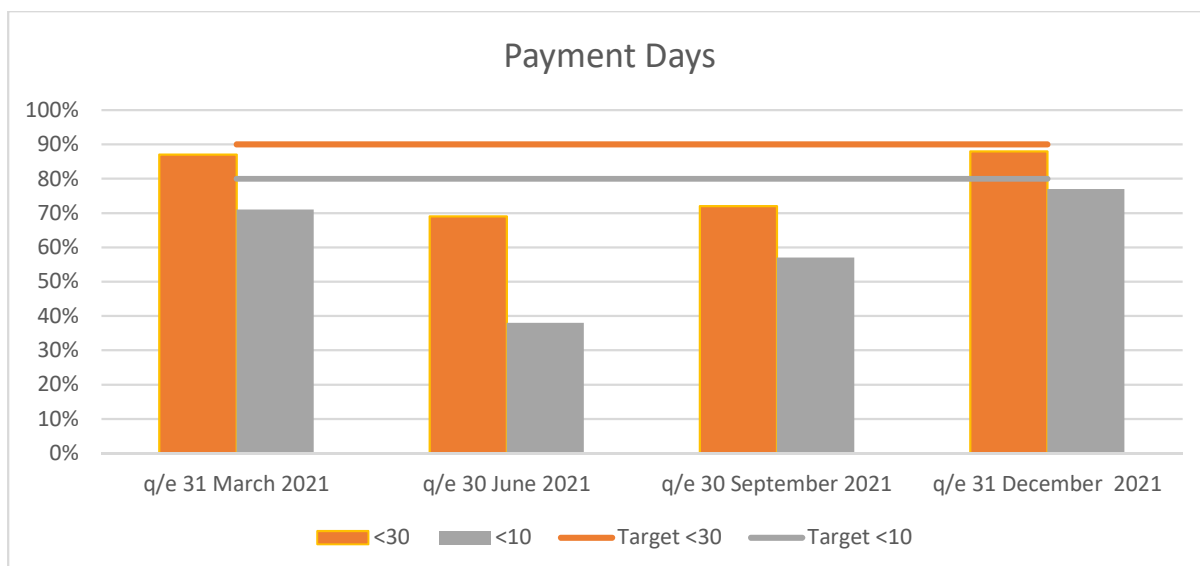
The Council paid 805 invoices outside of the 30-day target. (12%)

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

The quarterly results from q/e March 2021 to date are as follows:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 31 March 2021	4,611	87%	71%
q/e 30 June 2021	3,352	69%	38%
q/e 30 September 2021	5,867	72%	57%
q/e 31 December 2021	6,575	88%	77%

The performance presented graphically highlights the performance metrics for the above.



Members will recall that a new finance system went 'live' on 12 April 2021. This impacted on performance whilst the new system and procedures were embedded.

The table and graph above show the performance improvement over the last three quarters, with performance levels now exceeding that for quarter 4 of 2020/21.

This improvement has been sustained into the last quarter of 2021/22 as shown in the table below.

It is worth noting that the number of invoices paid for quarter 3; 6,575, have almost returned to pre-Covid levels; q/e 31 December 2019, 7,240 invoices paid.

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Quarter 1			
Apr	470	83%	49%
May	1,068	66%	28%
June	1,814	64%	33%
Quarter 2			
July	1,895	58%	42%
Aug	1,911	60%	58%
Sept	2,061	85%	69%
Quarter 3			
Oct	2,300	85%	73%
Nov	2,429	90%	79%
Dec	1,846	87%	76%
Quarter 4			
1 Jan – 26 Jan	1,281	90%	79%

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 30 September 2021 is shown in **Appendix 1 (enclosed)**; the Council's performance for Quarter 2 against the average performance for the other Councils for the same Quarter of 2021/22 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (2nd Quarter 2021/22)	72%	57%
All Councils (2nd Quarter 2021/22)	90%	63%

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

Agreed by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Approved by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Governance

5.2 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – DECEMBER 2021 – Period 9

A budget report for December 2021 – Period 9 is enclosed for Members' information.

The Council's financial position at the end of December 2021 shows a favourable variance of £1.34m.

Should the favourable position continue until the end of the financial year, contributions may be made to Reserves to offset future operational or rates losses, or for Borough Recovery and Strategic Projects.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

5.3 G/MSMO/27 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Members are advised that a meeting of the Member Development Working Group took place on Monday 10 January 2022 and a copy of the minutes is enclosed for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Minutes of the Member Development Working Group Meeting held on Monday 10 January 2022 be noted.

Prepared by: Sarah Fenton, Organisation Development Officer

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.4 CE/OA/035 NEXT STEPS IN THE 2023 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Correspondence has been received from the Boundaries Commission NI (BCNI) advising that, in line with their statutory duties, BCNI have published on their website the representations received during the initial consultation period, taking place ahead of the launch of the secondary six-week consultation on 9 February 2022.

The representations and Guide to the Secondary Consultation are available at: <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/2023-review-parliamentary-constituencies>

The Commission has advised that the secondary consultation period will provide an opportunity to submit further written representations with respect to the representations from the initial consultation period, which have been published. The secondary consultation period will also include a number of public hearings, at which oral representations can be made about any of the Commission's initial proposals, and about any counterproposals.

More details about the hearings will be published on the Commission's website on 9 February 2022.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

5.5 CCS/EDP/7 QUARTERLY SCREENING REPORT AND RURAL SCREENING

Members are advised that in line with the Council's Equality Scheme it was agreed to provide quarterly updates on the screening of policies under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the Council gave a commitment to apply screening methodology to all new and revised policies. Where necessary and appropriate, these new policies would be subject to further equality impact assessment.

SECTION 75 AND RURAL SCREENINGS

The policies noted below have been screened between October to December 2021.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Programme	1
Smoke and Vape Policy	1
PCSP Disability Action Plan 2022	1
Draft Dual Language Street Signs Policy	1

- (1) Screened with no mitigation
 (2) Screened with mitigation
 (3) Screened and EQIA required

CONSULTATIONS AND SURVEYS

The consultations and surveys noted below cover October to date:-

CONSULTATION / SURVEY TITLE	STATUS CLOSED
2021 Event Survey Corporate Recovery Plan	Closed 15 Oct 21
Balmoral Show Survey 2021	Closed 22 Oct 21
Borough Life Feeling Safe in Our Borough Survey	Closed 22 Nov 21
Draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan 202 –2026 Survey	Closed 3 Dec 21
Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership Survey	Closed 10 Jan 22
Enchanted Winter Garden 2021 Survey	Closed 14 Jan 22
Christmas Switch- On Events 2021 Survey	Closed 20 Jan 22
	STATUS OPEN
Enchanted Winter Garden 2021 Staff and Elected Member Survey	Closes 31 Jan 22
Borough Life Have Your Say Cleanliness of the Borough 2022	Closes 28 Feb 22
Draft Dual Language Street Sign Policy Consultation	Closes 31 Mar 22

Members are reminded that a separate consultation and survey update will be brought in due course to inform of feedback received.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Customer Services Officer

Agreed by: Nicola McCullough, Communications and Customer Services
Manager

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.6 HR/HR/019 AGENCY STAFF UPDATE

Members are reminded that agency staff are used across the Council to provide temporary cover for absence such as:

- Maternity leave
- Secondments
- Sickness absence
- Vacant posts

The use of agency staff is subject to a rigorous approval process, which requires the approval of the Corporate Leadership Team and there is budgetary provision for the majority of posts filled via departmental salary budgets, salary contingency and grant funding.

The table appended provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at December 2021 as compared to December 2020. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (**enclosed** at Appendix 1).

The expenditure on agency workers in December 2021 is **enclosed** at Appendix 2.

The cost of agency staff has increased for the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021 at 7.36% of all staffing costs compared to 4.14% for the same period last year. It should be noted that agency expenditure was significantly reduced last year following the release of agency workers in May 2020. This year's costs have also increased due to the late application of the April 2020 pay award and the respective back charges incurred.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Agreed by: Pauline Greer, Human Resources Manager

Approved by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

5.7 HR/HR/10 NJC PAY AWARD 2021/2022 - OFFICIAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION BALLOT

Members are advised that correspondence was received from UNITE the Union on 17 December 2021 providing notice that they are in dispute concerning the pay rates for 2021/2022, for workers whose pay is based on the pay awards made by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

UNITE have progressed this with further correspondence received on 18 January 2022 providing formal notification to the Council of an official industrial action ballot. Unite have advised they intend to ballot their members for industrial action with ballot papers to be issued on 25 January 2022 to 24 February 2022. A copy of this letter is enclosed at Appendix 1.

The outcome of ballots conducted by Unison, GMB and Unite all resulted in a rejection of the Employers' national pay offer for Local Government employees. Following this outcome, the Employers re-iterated their final offer (enclosed at Appendix 2) in response to the unions' request for an improvement.

GMB, UNITE the Union and NIPSA are the recognised trade unions within the Council. UNISON is not one of the Council's recognised trade unions and whilst they proceeded to ballot their members for industrial action from 1 December 2021 to 10 February 2022, the turnout failed to reach the required 50 per cent.

Members are advised that the Unite ballot currently underway is a disaggregated ballot which means that strike action could be taken at each individual Council where a turnout of at least 50% is secured and where members vote in favour of strike action.

GMB's national local government committee also plans to meet shortly to discuss its next steps in light of its consultative ballot to members which closed on 13 December 2021.

Updates will be provided to Committee as they arise.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Agreed by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

5.8 G-LEG-321/15 RATHMULLAN DRIVE, NEWTOWNABBEY

Members are advised that correspondence (**enclosed**) has been received from the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) to confirm that Rathmullan Drive, Newtownabbey, has now been adopted by Dfi Roads in accordance with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.

Prepared by: Elaine Keenan, Solicitor

Approved by: Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer & Head of Legal Services