



3 September 2020

Committee Chair: Alderman P Brett

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor N Kelly

Committee Members: Aldermen - F Agnew and M Cosgrove  
Councillors - H Cushinan, S Flanagan, R Foster, P Hamill,  
L Irwin, V McAuley, P Michael, S Ross, M Stewart and R Wilson

Dear Member

**MEETING OF THE POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

A remote meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill on Tuesday 8 September 2020 at 6.30pm.**

All Members are requested to attend the meeting via "Zoom".

To ensure social distancing it is only possible to facilitate 11 Members in the Council Chamber. Priority admission will be given to Committee Members on a first come, first served basis. This does not affect the rights of any Member participating in the meeting.

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**

**PLEASE NOTE: refreshments will not be available.**

**For any queries please contact Member Services:**

Tel: 028 9034 0048 / 028 9448 1301 [memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## **A G E N D A**

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### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **3 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1 Corporate Planning Workshop 2020
- 3.2 Application for Renewal of Premises for Civil Marriage/Civil Partnership Ceremonies
- 3.3 Second Independent Review of the Personal Independence Payment Process (Northern Ireland)
- 3.4 Surveillance Camera Policy
- 3.5 LGSC Consultation on the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees

### **4 ITEMS FOR NOTING**

- 4.1 Quarterly Screening Report and Rural Screening
- 4.2 Annual Review of Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management
- 4.3 Quarterly Report on FOI/EIR/DPA Requests
- 4.4 Rural Monitoring Return
- 4.5 Agency Update
- 4.6 Managing Attendance
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- 4.8 Members Attendance at Meetings
- 4.9 Prompt Payment Performance
- 4.10 COVID-19: Financial Impact on Local Government
- 4.11 Collection of Rates – Land and Property Services
- 4.12 Local Government Performance Improvement 2020-21
- 4.13 Department for Infrastructure – The Private Street (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 – Development at Fennel Road Developments at Fennel Road, Antrim and Derrycoole Park, Newtownabbey

- 4.14 National Fraud Initiative 2020-21
- 4.15 Belfast Road, Antrim and Moneynick Road, Toomebridge DFI Roads – Proposed Speed Limit Reduction
- 4.16 Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) September 2020 Bulletin

**5 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE**

- 5.1 Burial Capacity Update
- 5.2 The Steeple House Update
- 5.3 John Street Playground – 5 year Review of Lease Rental Payments

**6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE  
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON  
TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**3. ITEMS FOR DECISION**

**3.1 PT/CI/030 CORPORATE PLANNING WORKSHOP 2020**

Members are reminded that as part of the strategic governance process of Council an annual Corporate Planning Workshop is held to obtain Elected Members views and input to the strategic direction of Council.

It is proposed that the Corporate Planning Workshop is held on Friday 16 October 2020, 9.30 am – 4.30 pm in Mossley Mill (or via Zoom).

The Corporate Workshop will primarily focus on Council finances. The timetable for preparation of the Rates estimates for 2021/22 is enclosed for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Corporate Planning Workshop be held on Friday 16 October 2020.**

Prepared by: Helen Hall, Head of Performance and Transformation

Agreed by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

### 3.2 **CCS/REG/11; CCS/REG/18 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES**

Under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and the Civil Partnership Act (2004), the Council has the responsibility to approve appropriate applications for Place Approvals for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships. These approvals are valid for three years.

Renewal applications have been received from the following for the re-approval of an area at the specified premises:

- The Rabbit Hotel, Templepatrick (*previous The Templeton Hotel*)  
The Fern Room  
The Lounge  
The Garden
- Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim  
Laburnum 1  
Laburnum 2  
Fernhill Suite

Part of the process requires that a Notice of Interest be displayed for a three week period in a prominent place at the premises to allow for public objection. No objections have been received to any of the notifications to apply for Place Approval.

The premises have been formally inspected and no problems have been found with regard to the application.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the named premises be re-approved to hold Civil Marriages/Civil Partnership Ceremonies**

Prepared by: Emma Thompson, Registrar

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

### **3.3 CE/GEN/004 SECOND INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT PROCESS (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

Members are advised that correspondence has been received (enclosed) from the PIP Independent Review Team regarding their request to the Department of Communities (DfC) for an extension to the Call for Evidence period until 16 October 2020.

The PIP Independent Review Team welcomes Members' views. More detailed information and details of how to respond can be found on the following link: [www.communities-ni.gov.uk/indpipreview2](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/indpipreview2)

**RECOMMENDATION: that Members respond on an individual or Party political basis.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

### 3.4 G/IG/7 SURVEILLANCE CAMERA POLICY

The purpose of the Policy is to regulate the management, operation and use of surveillance camera systems that are operated by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. Systems in use include:

- CCTV cameras on Council owned buildings and facilities
- Town Centre CCTV cameras
- In vehicle all round vision cameras
- Body Worn Video (BWV)

The existing policy has been revised to reflect ICO guidance and new applications. CCTV systems at Council assets and Town Centre are currently under review and this policy will be amended to reflect the outcome of the review.

The following changes have been made:

<b>Previous CCTV Policy</b>	<b>Surveillance Camera Policy</b>
Covered CCTV systems at Council assets and in town centre	Includes other surveillance cameras such as in vehicle all round vision cameras and body worn video
All internal requests for footage were approved by the relevant Head of Service <b>or</b> Director	All internal requests for footage are to be approved by the relevant Head of Service <b>and</b> Director
Typographical error in section 5.11.1 – stated that images should not be retained for longer than 30 days unless required for evidential purposes but later in the paragraph referred to 31 days	Typographical error amended to state 30 days

The policy is **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Surveillance Camera Policy be approved.**

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director Finance and Governance

### **3.5 HR/ER/002 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES**

Members are advised that the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) is consulting on the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and a copy of the consultation documents are **enclosed** at Appendix 1a and 1b.

This consultation had been delayed due to COVID19 and the response deadline was extended from 22 May 2020 to 30 September 2020.

The proposed consultation response is **enclosed** at Appendix 2 for Member's consideration.

A suggested substantive change relates to Paragraph 4.6 (page 14) i.e. removing the requirement for an employee to seek permission from the Council to have a second job or business.

It is proposed that our response sets out a preference to retain this requirement as Managers from the outset would be able to discuss the request and any related implications, prior to an employee accepting a second job. Also noted within the consultation response is that this proposed change appears to be contradicted in Appendix 1 (page 20) as it deals with mitigating any conflict by first 'seeking permission'.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the draft response be approved.**

Prepared & Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development



#### 4. ITEMS FOR NOTING

##### 4.1 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.

The policies noted below have been screened between April to June 2020.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Council owned car parks for drive in events	1
Licensing of pavement cafes act	1

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

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Customer Accessibility and Equality Officer

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisational Development

## 4.2 FC/FA/8 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS & TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Members are reminded that the Council approved the Prudential Indicators for 2019/20 to 2020/21 and the Treasury Management Strategies for 2019/20 in January 2019.

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

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

This report compares the approved Prudential Indicators with the outturn position for 2019/20 and the annual report on the Council's borrowing and investment activities for 2019/20.

A copy of the annual report is **enclosed** for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

### 4.3 G/DPFI/2 QUARTERLY REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

A report has been prepared on requests received in the first quarter of the year (1 April to 30 June) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this is enclosed.

Members will recall that it was agreed by the Strategic Response Team on 20 March 2020 that the processing of FOI/EIR/DPA requests should be suspended as a non-essential service to permit resources to focus on the essential services. This decision was endorsed by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who recognised that resources might be diverted away from information governance work due to COVID-19. Following the relaxation of COVID restrictions the normal governance process was reactivated again on 1 June.

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

- There was a 61% decrease in the number of requests on the same period the previous year.
- Of the 38 requests received, 24 were under FOI, 12 under EIR and 2 under DPA.
- 28 requests were completed within the quarter (this includes 13 requests which had their deadline extended due to COVID-19 and 4 which were placed on hold and were not reactivated by the requester when notified that processing of requests was resuming).
- 100% of the requests 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 Planning (11), Environmental Health (8), Governance (8) and Communications and Customer Services (8).
- One appeal was received during the quarter, however this related to information that could not be provided as it was not held by the Council and the appeal was not upheld.
- One complaint to the ICO was notified during the quarter relating to an exception applied to an EIR request regarding a planning application. A full response to the complaint was provided to the ICO by the deadline of 24 June 2020 and their decision is awaited.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

#### **4.4 CCS/EDP/14 RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016, ANNUAL MONITORING RETURN**

Members are reminded that on 1 June 2017, the Rural Needs Act became operational for district councils and government departments.

The Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities and local councils to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies, plans and when designing and delivering public services. It also requires public authorities to provide information to Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on how they have fulfilled this duty on an annual basis and to collate this information in their annual report.

The Rural Needs Annual Monitoring report for 2019 to 2020 is **enclosed** for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Customer Accessibility and Equality Officer

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

#### 4.5 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 July 2020 as compared to July 2019. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (**enclosed** at Appendix 1).

**Enclosed** at Appendix 2 is the expenditure on agency workers in July 2020.

The cost of agency staff has decreased for the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 July 2020 at 4% of all staffing costs compared to 6% for the same period last year. Agency expenditure has significantly reduced following the release of agency workers in May 2020.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, Human Resources Administrator

Reviewed by: Jennifer Close, Human Resources Manager

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

## **4.6 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE**

The purpose of this report is to update Members about the position relating to the management of attendance from (a) April 2019 – March 2020 (summary **enclosed**) and also from (b) April 2020 – July 2020 (summary **enclosed**).

### **1. April 2019 – March 2020 Attendance Update**

Attendance improved during the last financial year as the average days absence per employee was 12.42 against a target of 13 days, which represents 0.58 days within target.

The number of employees with 100% attendance was 59%, which marked an improvement when compared to the same period the previous year (57% of employees had full attendance).

#### **1.1 April 2020 – July 2020 Attendance Update**

Excluding COVID-19 sickness absences, attendance has also improved during this current financial year. The average days absence per employee was 2.77 against a target of 4.09 days, which represents 1.32 days within target.

The number of employees with 100% attendance was 92%, which marks an improvement when compared to the same period the previous year (81% of employees had full attendance).

### **2. Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Council's Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Strategy has supported its management of attendance as it recognises the correlation between employee engagement, wellbeing and organisational performance. It is rooted in the understanding that health & wellbeing is about proactively avoiding illness, and optimising employees' physical and mental health. The Council has established a holistic approach, with a range of interventions across the organisation.

Robust policies support a health focused culture and the vital role of line-management is key in managing attendance and employee engagement. The Council invested in delivering a capacity-building management programme (iLead) to boost line-managers' skills and confidence to guide staff through change processes. Regular 1-1 meetings between line-managers and employees cascaded the coaching culture through the organisation, as well as building in opportunities to check and address work or personal issues at an early stage.

E-learning and the use of the 'iConnect' staff app enables staff to access training and key information anytime. Approximately two-thirds of our staff have used these tools to keep connected and continue learning, aligning not only with the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy, but with our partner organisation, the Health & Social Care Trust's 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' initiative.

Active recognition and open communication ensures employees are valued. A comprehensive communication programme including team meetings, email e-zines and recognition events showcased staff achievements and promoted ways for staff to support their own wellbeing. Other activities, included in the strategy and related action plan, are as follows:

- Training for line managers on absence management
- Streamlining staff sickness reporting procedures
- Communication of occupational health service, employee assistance programmes and counselling
- Delivery of health events linked to the top three reasons for absence each year
- Commencement of the roll out of a Mental Health Toolkit
- 100% attendees get a letter of recognition for full attendance, from the Mayor
- Low cost staff leisure membership
- On-site access to cancer screening via the Action Cancer 'Big Bus' twice yearly.

The Council employs a range of measures to assess the impact of the strategy, including:

- An annual corporate objective to reduce absence
- Number of referrals to occupational health
- Increase in participants at health events
- Increase in mental health training for managers
- Reduction in long-term absence
- Sustaining the number of employees with 100% attendance

HR Partners will continue to work with Heads of Service and Managers to monitor long term absence cases, do all that is possible to proactively accomplish employee health and wellbeing and to improve the ongoing management of attendance.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared and Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

#### **4.7 FI/FIN/044 FINANCE AND PAYROLL SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT UPDATE**

Members will recall that approval was given for the implementation of the new Finance and Payroll finance system at February's Policy & Governance meeting.

It was agreed that Members would be kept updated on the progress and a project update report is now **enclosed** for Members information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance



#### **4.8 G/MSMO/41 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Members are advised that during the previous term of Council, it was agreed that attendance records for each of the Council and Committee meetings be summarised on a six monthly basis (June-November) and published on the Council's website.

A summary sheet has been prepared showing the total attendance for the period 1 December 2019 to 31 July 2020, extended to eight months to include the meetings up to and including the Annual Meeting, and is **enclosed** for Members' information, prior to publication on the Council's website.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the summary sheet recording Members' attendance for each of the Council meetings; and Committee Member attendance for each of the Committee meetings for the period from 1 December 2019 to 31 July 2020 be noted.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

#### 4.9 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

Members are reminded 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 April 2020 to 30 June 2020** 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 4,032 invoices totalling £10,652,715.

The Council paid 3,518 invoices within the 30 day target. (87%)

The Council paid 2,970 invoices within the 10 day target. (74%)

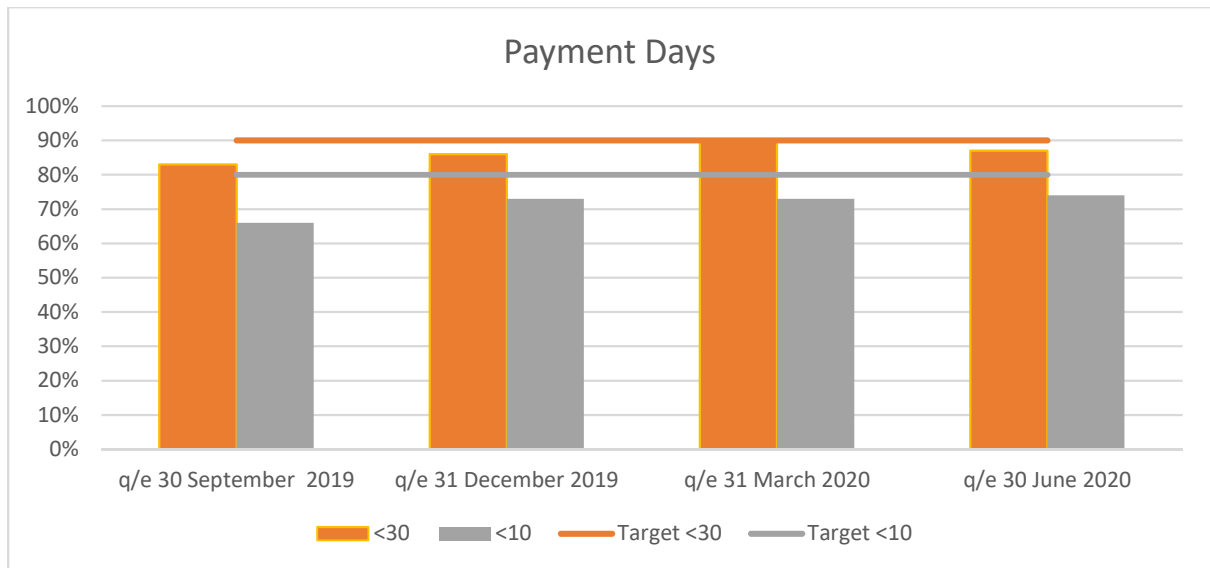
The Council paid 514 invoices outside of the 30 day target. (13%)

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

The quarterly results from September 2019 to date are as follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Total Number of Invoices Paid</b>	<b>% Paid Within 30 Days</b>	<b>% Paid Within 10 Days</b>
<b>Target</b>		<b>90%</b>	<b>80%</b>
q/e 30 Sept 2019	6,342	83%	66%
q/e 31 Dec 2019	7,240	86%	73%
q/e 31 March 2020	6,308	90%	73%
q/e 30 June 2020	4,032	87%	74%

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

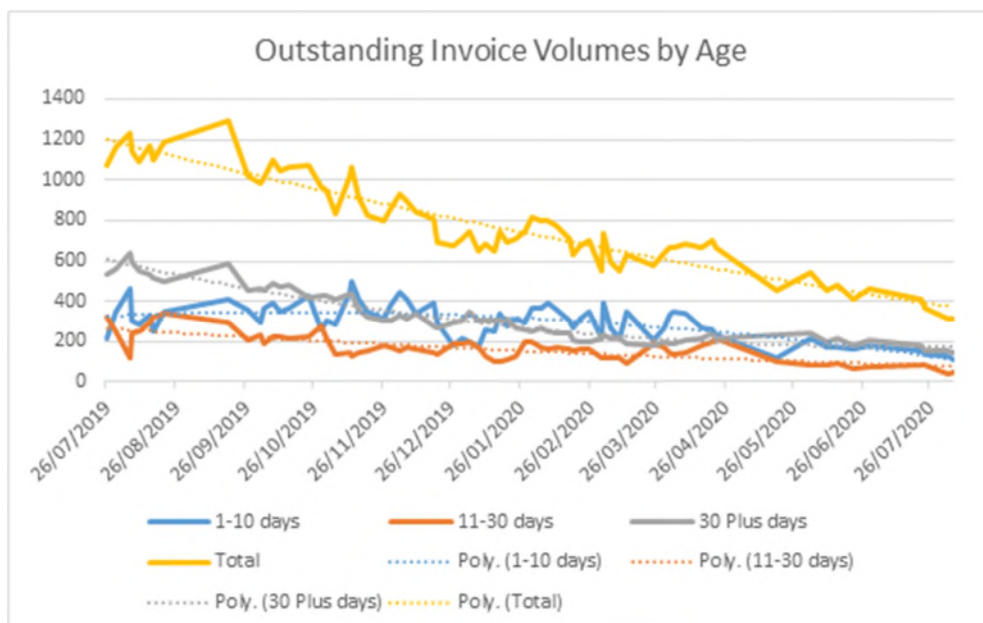


During the last quarter of 2019/20 the target of paying 90% of invoices within 30 days was met, with performance for the 10 day target remaining the same as the previous quarter.

Performance for the first quarter of 2020/21 was similar to quarter 4 of 2019/20 for the 10 day target with a slight decrease in the 30 day target. This was mainly due to workarounds being put in place for invoice approvals and delivery of orders as some officers working remotely due to COVID-19 were unable to access the finance system for a period of time.

The volume of invoices paid (4,032 invoices) for Quarter 1 for 2020/21 compared to the same quarter for 2019/20 (6,680 invoices paid) was down by approx. 40%, with many facilities closed or services reduced due to COVID-19.

Central to the performance improvement over the year has been the monitoring regime implemented by the Corporate Leadership Team. Another outturn of this is that the overall level of outstanding invoices has decreased markedly from over 1200 in August 2019 to now below 400.



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 March 2020 is shown in **enclosed Appendix 1**; the Council's performance for Quarter 4 against the average performance for the other Councils for the final quarter of 2019/20 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (4th Quarter 2019/20)	90%	73%
All Councils (4th Quarter 2019/20)	86%	56%

Whilst both indicators are now better than the average for all councils in Q4 we will continue to strive to improve performance whilst maintaining a high level of good governance and internal control in relation to supplier payments. Performance levels remain a priority for senior staff and other enhancements, for example, tolerance levels and further decreases to the overall outstanding volumes will bring additional improvements.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

#### 4.10 FI/FIN/043 COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As Council commences the rate setting process for 2021/22, there is ongoing communications with Department for Communities and Department of Finance in relation to the challenging financial position to Councils.

SOLACE NI have written to the departments to acknowledge the assistance that has already been provided but also to ask for additional support **enclosed**.

The four main items requested are:

1. The Estimated Penny Product figure used for the 2020/21 rates estimates will be paid to Councils for the current year and the next two financial years without reduction.
2. Land and Property Services will work more closely with Councils to develop a robust forecasting model for rates income.
3. Continued supported in year for lost income and additional costs as a result of COVID19
4. Extension of timeframe to set the 2021/22 district rate.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

#### **4.11 FI/FIN/043 COLLECTION OF RATES – LAND AND PROPERTY SERVICES (LPS)**

As part of the 2020/21 Emergency Financial Plan of Council assumptions were made in relation to the level of Rates Collection in year this has been used to produce scenarios which identify gaps in funding to deliver Council services.

SOLACE on behalf of all eleven Councils had previously asked Land and Property Services (June 2020) for more information on the forecasting model used for collection of rates.

This request has been followed up by a letter from this Council **enclosed** requesting specific information in relation to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Collection levels. The information requested is even more important now as we progress the rate setting process for 2021/22

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

#### **4.12 PT/CI/029 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT DUTIES 2020-21**

Members are informed that correspondence (**enclosed** for Members' information) has been received from the Department for Communities regarding a decision to set aside the requirement to produce and publish a performance improvement plan for the 2020/21 year. Councils will still be required to publish their performance improvement assessment report covering 2019/20, with a publication date of 30 September 2020.

The Department is further considering the arrangements regarding performance improvement for the next few years and in doing so will be taking the views of Councils and the Local Government Auditor before submitting proposals for consideration by the Minister.

Members' will be kept informed of progress on this matter.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: James Porter, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Helen Hall, Head of Performance and Transformation

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

**4.13 G-LEG-325 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE – THE PRIVATE STREET (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1980 – DEVELOPMENT AT FENNEL ROAD DEVELOPMENTS AT FENNEL ROAD, ANTRIM AND DERRYCOOLE PARK, NEWTOWNABBEY**

Correspondence has been received from the Department for Infrastructure advising that streets at the above developments have now been adopted by DfI Roads (copy correspondence **enclosed**).

**RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.**

Prepared by: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

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



#### **4.14 FI/AUD/97 NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE 2020-21**

##### **Background**

The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise run by the Audit Commission and is designed to help participating bodies identify possible cases of fraud and detect and correct under or overpayments from the public purse.

##### **NI Position**

The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG), head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), has statutory powers to conduct matching exercises for the purpose of assisting in the prevention and detection of fraud. These powers are contained in the Serious Crime Act 2007, which inserts Articles 4A to 4H to the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

The Council must participate in this exercise and supply the following information for matching to that of other public sector bodies to identify possible fraud or error:

1. Payroll – total payments made to current employees and members from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020; and
2. Trade Creditors payment history and standing data – payment history from 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020 and the current Creditor information held at the date of date extract (from 9 October 2020).

Where a match is found, it indicates that there is an inconsistency that may require further investigation to establish what has caused the match and any further action that may be deemed necessary. Examples of possible matches are as follows:

- An employee with the Council who has a second employment with another Council or public body;
- An employee who is also a supplier to the Council or has been paid through Creditors;
- Suppliers who are associated with other suppliers, eg. through address.

##### **Results notification and possible action**

Data extracted will then be matched with other Public Sector datasets and prioritised into the order of how closely the dataset matches. Matches will be available from Thursday 28 January 2021.

The Council is responsible for investigating these matches. All matches will be considered by the Head Internal Audit, who will determine further action if appropriate including invocation of the Fraud Response Plan.

##### **Data Transfer**

Datasets must be provided to the Audit Commission from 9 October 2020. TotalMobile has previously developed reports to extract the information in the format required by the NIAO.

A secure electronic upload facility is available enabling data for NFI to be submitted directly from local computers. This facility is contained within the existing secure NFI web application and consequently provides the same controlled access environment. It features an Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256 Secure Sockets Layer encryption and enables data files to be password protected. No other method of data transfer to the NFI is acceptable.

Access to the NFI website will be restricted to those officers deemed necessary by the Chief Executive.

### **Participating bodies**

Organisations participating in this exercise are those that provide data to the Comptroller and Auditor General, or his agents (such as the Audit Commission), for the purposes of a data matching exercise, which may be on either a mandatory or voluntary basis.

Mandatory bodies are those bodies whose accounts are required to be audited by:

1. the Comptroller and Auditor General, except for bodies audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General by virtue of section 55 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; or
2. a Local Government Auditor.

Since the Council's accounts are audited by a Local Government Auditor the Council must supply the required information.

Other mandatory participants include Central Government, Education Boards, and Health Trusts throughout the United Kingdom.

Further information is available on the Council's website at:

<http://www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/Council/Procurement/National-Fraud-Initiative>

or by contacting Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit on 028 9446 3113 ext. 31395 or at [paul.caulcutt@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:paul.caulcutt@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk).

**RECOMMENDATION: that the National Fraud Initiative 2020-21 report be noted.**

Prepared by: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

**4.15 G-LEG-321-5 BELFAST ROAD, ANTRIM & MONEYNICK ROAD, TOOMEBRIDGE  
DFI ROADS – PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION**

A matter was brought to Council in July 2020 relating to proposed speed limit restrictions at the above locations. Unfortunately the letter received from Transport NI was incorrect and an amended letter was subsequently received after the matter had been reported to Council.

The amendment is that the 30 mph zone on the Belfast Road, Antrim will be from Burlon Road to Belmont Road Roundabout, rather than Burlon Road to its junction with Fountain Hill. (copy of the correspondence and maps **enclosed**.)

**RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.**

Prepared by: Elaine Keenan, Legal Services Officer (Solicitor)

Approved by: Paul Casey, Head of Legal Services

**4.16 CE/OA/005 NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (NILGA) – SEPTEMBER 2020 BULLETIN**

Members are advised that NILGA has circulated the September 2020 Bulletin and a copy is **enclosed** for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the NILGA September 2020 Bulletin be noted.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive