2 February 2023

Committee Chair: Councillor M Magill
Committee Vice-Chair: Alderman M Girvan

Committee Members: Aldermen – T Burns and P Michael

                          Councillors – H Cushinan, S Flanagan, R Foster,
                          M Goodman, B Mallon, A McAuley, T McGrann,
                          N Ramsay, V Robinson, B Webb and R Wilson

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 7 February 2023 at 6.30 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

Jacqui Dixon

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

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

For any queries please contact Member Services:
Tel: 028 9034 0107/028 9448 1301
memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1   APOLOGIES

2   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3   INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

4   PRESENTATION

   4.1   NI Reval 2023 Presentation, Department of Finance (Remote)

5   ITEMS FOR DECISION

   5.1   Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

   5.2   Review of Secure Desk Policy

   5.3   Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors 2022-23

   5.4   Website Report

6   ITEMS FOR NOTING

   6.1   Budget Report – December 2022 - Period 9

   6.2   Agency Staff Update

   6.3   Managing Attendance

   6.4   Quarterly Screening Report & Rural Screening

   6.5   Communication and Customer Channels Report

   6.6   Members' attendance at Meetings

   6.7   Quarterly Report on FOI/EIR/DPA Requests

7   ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

   7.1   Corporate Planning Workshop 2022

8   ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
7 FEBRUARY 2023

4.   **PRESENTATION**

4.1   **NI REVAL 2023 PRESENTATION**

A representative from the Valuation Services Directorate of the Department of Finance, Gary Humphrey, will give this presentation, a copy of which is enclosed for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the presentation be noted.

5   ITEMS FOR DECISION

5.1   FI/FA/5   FI/FA/6   FI/FA/7   FI/FA/8   FI/FA/9   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 on 15 February 2023.

(a)   FI/FA/6   Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2023/24

Under Regulation 6 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, councils have a statutory requirement to charge to their general fund an amount of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which it considers to be 'prudent' in respect of the financing of capital expenditure.

A copy of the Council's MRP Policy 2023/24 is enclosed.

(b)   FI/FA/7   Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26

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 2023/24 to 2025/26, a copy of which is enclosed.

(c)   FI/FA/8 Treasury Management Strategy

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.

(d)   FI/FA/9 Report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

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 when considering the estimates for the next financial year.

(e)   FI/FA/5 Capital Strategy

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.

RECOMMENDATION: that

(i)   the MRP Policy 2023/24 be approved;
(ii)   the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26 be noted;
(iii)   the Treasury Management Policy be approved;
(iv)   the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 be approved;
(v)   the Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 be approved;
(vi)   the Report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of the Reserves be noted.
(vii)   the Capital Strategy 2023/24 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

5.2   G/IG/7   REVIEW OF SECURE DESK POLICY

The Secure Desk Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the agreed Policy Framework and schedule. The Policy was last reviewed in January 2021 (two year review cycle).

The review has identified a number of minor amendments as being required:
- update regarding changes in organisational structure;
- inclusion of Rural Needs and Data Protection Impact Assessment statements in accordance with the Policy Framework template;
- version control table added.

The amendments to the policy have been approved by CLT. The draft policy with the amendments incorporated is enclosed.

RECOMMENDATION: that the reviewed Secure Desk Policy be approved.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.3   G/MSMO/1   SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS 2022-23

Members are reminded that the Council is required under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 to make a scheme for the payment of allowances to councillors and committee members in respect of each year.

Circular LG 03/2023 Consolidated Councillor Allowances – Updated January 2023, as enclosed, has been received from the Department for Communities reflecting an increase in the maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2022 and an increase in the maximum rates for Dependants' Carers' Allowance applicable from 1 April 2023. The Council's Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors has been updated (enclosed) to show the new maximum rates applied from the valid dates.

All previously agreed Special Responsibility Allowances have been increased by 4.00% in line with the increase in the Basic Allowance.

Any future notifications from the Department for Communities in relation to changes to the allowances payable for the 2022-23 financial year shall be reported to Members for their approval.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for 2022-23 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

5.4   CCS/CPRM/010   WEBSITE REPORT

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's key corporate website www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk has been operating since January 2019. Below is a breakdown of the analytics of the site since its launch.

Period	Hits *(no of pages viewed)*	Sessions *(No of visits to website)*	Users *(No of different users visiting)*
Jan 2019 – Dec 2022 *Total since launch of site*	10M	4.2M	2M
2019-20	2.7M	1.1M	506k
2020-21	2.5M	1.1M	485k
2021-22	2.8M	1.25M	630k

The corporate website is a central site. It provides centralised information and links to seven other specialised transactional sites/software platforms which enable digital customer transactions as outlined in the table below.

Software System	Purpose	Data Managed By
Legend	Leisure bookings and membership management	Leisure
Spektrix	Theatres and event booking system	Arts & Culture
Tascomi	Dog licencing, building applications, and property certificates	Environmental Health
Eventbrite	Business courses, leisure and community	Marketing/Customer Service
Goss	Waste services - management of bulky collections, bin/composter orders, service requests, and street cleansing. Customer Services - Complaints management and general enquiries Environmental Health - Pest noise concerns, dog fouling and fly tipping reporting, Training Courses, consumer reporting, animal welfare and dog concerns. Parks - commemorative Bench requests, maintenance requests for parks, grass/trees, cemeteries and reporting non-native invasive species	Waste Customer Services Environmental Health Parks
Citizen Space/ Consultation Portal	Consultation and survey portal	Customer Services
Grant Manager	For grants in all areas in council	Community Services
GetGot	Recruitment	HR

These platforms are not embedded into the website and whilst the user may not be aware of this, the user actually leaves the corporate website to complete their transaction. Each individual software package is managed by the relevant department as outlined.

In addition, the Council operates eight further websites, which are listed below. Each site has its own purpose and objectives, which are summarised below and enclosed.

Website	No of Hits* in 2021-22
Tourism Website **visitantrimandnewtownabbey.com**	200k
Theatre at the Mill **theatreatthemill.com**	110k
The Old Courthouse **theoldcourthousetheatre.com**	10.5k
The Courtyard Theatre **thecourtyardtheatre.com**	4.9k
enchantedwintergarden.com	331k
Garden Show Ireland **gardenshowireland.com**	New website - Jan 23
Spinning Yarns **spinningyarnsfestival.com**	New website - May 23

1. Website Contract and Support

The Corporate website was built by Simply Zesty in 2018 to Council's custom specifications which included a bespoke homepage, section pages, bin checker, page templates and a selection of banners and notifications bars. Simply Zesty manage the site via a Support Contract which includes hosting of the site and media/document library, ensuring the site is live and protected at all times, fixes any technical errors, provide updates and makes minor changes and enhancements in order to optimise the customer journey.
The contract currently runs until October 2023 and may be extended for a maximum of one further year before a re-tender is required.

2. Website Reviews and Customer Feedback

In 2022 a number of external reviews were carried out of the Council's main corporate website (using 2021 data) which provided further analytical, expert and customer feedback.

a.   <u>Analytics</u>

During 2021, the corporate website had over 1.2 million visits, from 602,000 users, 74% of which were new to the website. Most users viewed two pages and stayed on the website for around 1 minutes 41 seconds. Total pages viewed exceeded 2.7 million.

User data is monitored by the Digital Marketing Team via Hotjar and Google Analytics. This data provides real time feedback on the customer journey and potential difficulties encountered by customers as they navigate through the website.

The website is designed to be mobile first, this means that it is primarily designed to respond to a mobile device, narrowing and stacking sections so that users can scroll through the page, menus are stacked/drop down and removing or editing imagery where appropriate to allow for speedy uploads. This is important given that 84% of our users visit the website on a mobile device.

In March 2022, an external agency, KP Digital Marketing, was commissioned to perform a usability review of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council corporate website: antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk.
The report included:
• 	Review of statistics, including page views, using Google Analytics
• 	Review of heat maps, identifying user patterns, using HotJar
• 	Review of videos, analysing user behaviours, using HotJar
• 	Review of search traffic & performance terms, using Search Console

During 2021, the top visited page on the website was Leisure (due to COVID, only one page was live during this time, rather than a full section), followed by the homepage, O'Neill Road Recycle Centre and the Bin Checker.

Most visitors land directly into these pages indicating that they have been driven there as the result of a search engine (e.g. Google search) or direct link (e.g. from social media). These pages also have high percentage exit rates, which indicates that they found what they were looking for and then left the website. This would be supported by the statistic that the average number of pages visited on the site is 2.4 and the length of time 1minute and 41seconds.

Analysis of the website search tool showed that 1.9% of users used the search function on the website (where a search results page is returned) and using the CMS we can see that there have been over 75,700 searches carried out on the site. This is a very low percentage of users (industry average states that 30% of users use a website search box). This suggests that users can find the information they are looking for easily, or that they have landed directly to the page they were looking for, as the result of a search engine (e.g. Google search) or direct link (e.g. from social media). Top searches for the site include; golf, recycling, planning, swimming, bin collection, building control, Allen Park and Leisure. To optimise the search feature further, popular content with suggested search terms appearing is planned for 2023.

The findings of the review indicated that the website was performing well and meeting the expectations for the majority of users and that minor amendments can be made to enhance the journey for those who do have frustrations or find it difficult to navigate.

This normal quick-visit to the website indicated by the analytics means that the website is serving the customer's purpose but it is noted there are sections of the website that do not experience large volumes of traffic but which do support the delivery and messaging of the Council's key corporate priorities (e.g. climate change).

b.   Customer Feedback - Mystery shop report

This review was completed in October 2022. The review commissioned six individuals of varying age and digital ability to carry out 11 of the most frequently used tasks on Council's website and to feedback on their experience.

The report has suggested a number of learnings that proved easily implemented on the current site and which have been actioned (see below).

A number of issues have been identified with the third party systems customer journey.

Actions implemented from the Mystery shopper report:
- Worked with Arts & Culture to add a description of what the tokens are used for when booking Enchanted Winter Garden on Ticketsolve software.
- Worked with Simply Zesty to develop a way to push our events to Google Listings.
- When users clicked the Bryson Collection Dates link on our website it sent them to an old page on their website (Bryson updated their site). This has now been edited and users are sent from our site to the correct page on Bryson.
- Out of date information was removed.
- All Ticketsolve feedback was been provided to Arts & Culture for consideration now and for when migrating to Spektrix.
- All Legend feedback was provided to Leisure for consideration and optimisation of the user journey.

A summary report (enclosed) outlines the detailed recommendations and actions taken.

c.   External Review - MCE Communications Report

MCE, an independent public relations company, reviewed the website as part of a wider communications project. A summary of the relevant website findings and recommendations is enclosed.

The review found that the website loads quickly, reformats well for mobile browsing and created a welcoming, great first impression.

Each section of the website was analysed and the overall feedback outlined that there was a lot of information on the site, the menus clear and the search function on the top right was strategically placed and worked well. The reviewer was not always aware of leaving the site to perform tasks and although generally positive, the summary of findings has identified opportunities for improvement.

3. Improvements

There are recommendations across the three reports including many of a technical nature, which continue to be progressed. On a wider scale the following steps are proposed:

- Review the current corporate website to refresh in line with external feedback and the current contract and recommendations to include:

  - Continue to improve navigation paths that engage the customer to find more priority content, attract users with additional information, including special offers, testimonials, reports, case studies, promotion of Council objectives
  - Updated and modern responsive visual design that is tightly integrated with social media, which showcase services and drives usage/hits
  - Increased audience engagement and promote digital interaction and conversation, enabling more online conversation and direct feedback
  - Drive hits to support key corporate activity, e.g. 1 million trees, climate change, cost of living.

- Review all websites and agree Council requirements in line with new Corporate Strategy and scope/cost proposals for required updates in 2024/25.

- Scope migration to one content management system supplier in 2024/25 to enable integration of all/more of agreed Council websites and ensure an improved customer journey.

- Agree workflows and required training for each site to permit agreed sections to carry out their own updates.

- A new tender required to meet procurement requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: that the following be approved:

(i)   Two replacement microsites are built internally to facilitate 2023 event requirements.

(ii)   A scoping review is conducted through the appointment of an external contractor to improve navigation and streamlining of content to make the customer journey easier and more relaxed at an approximate cost of £3,000.

(iii) **The internal development of new content/sections of the website are scheduled for key Council developments including Crematorium and Bereavement Services, King's Coronation and One Million Trees.**

(iv) **A programme of internal content review is carried out along with the delivery of the Improvement Action Plan as listed in the enclosure.**

(v) **Improvements are implemented for the cross marketing of social media sites on all areas of the website through the change in templates and where appropriate integration of social media platforms and links to the Residents App. This will require developer time at an approximate cost of £1,500 - £1,800.**

(vi) **New tender requirements are scoped to include all of the Council's website presence including a pre-market engagement exercise. A further update to be brought to Council with proposed costs and timelines following the scoping exercise.**

Prepared by: Emma McConville, Digital Marketing Manager

Agreed by: Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

6   ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6.1   FI/FIN/4   BUDGET REPORT – DECEMBER 2022 – Period 09

A budget report for December 2022 – Period 09 is enclosed for Members' information.

The Council's financial position at the end of December 2022 shows an adverse variance on Net Cost of Services of £1.2m.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Capital

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

.

6.2   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
- Seasonal Events

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.

Current Agency staff

The table appended provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff in December 2022 compared to December 2019 (pre covid-19). It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (enclosed). Given the exceptional nature of 2020/21; 2019/20 agency figures have been used for comparison.

In reviewing the number of agency workers it should be noted that:

- In December 2022 we reduced to 97 agency workers – 44 are temporary to support the Enchanted Winter Garden event from 18 November – 20 December 2022. These agency workers ended on 20 December 2022.
- Seasonal Grounds Maintenance Operatives who usually end in October each year have been retained for further cover this year due to vacancies and operational demands within Parks. The number reduced from 17 to 5 in early December 2022.

Cost of Agency

Expenditure on agency workers in December 2022 is enclosed.

The cost of agency staff from 1 April 2022 to December 2022 has reduced for the same period in 2019/2020 (pre-covid) from 6.4% to 6% of all staffing costs.

The costs have been impacted by:

- The 1.75% NJC pay increase for the 2021 financial year,
- The increase in National Insurance of 1.25% from 6 April 2022; this has been reversed effective from 5 November 2022.

Costs will also be impacted going forward following the agreement of the 2022 NJC pay award and subsequent trade union negotiations.

Recruitment exercises are ongoing to fill remaining posts in Finance that are covered through agencies. We will continue to reduce the number of agency workers as we recruit to fill vacant positions directly with agency being utilised for more ad hoc, seasonal, temporary cover when required.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Kirsty Clarke, Human Resources Advisor (Systems)

Agreed by: Pauline Greer, Human Resources Manager

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

6.3   HR/GEN/019   MANAGING ATTENDANCE

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the management of attendance from April 2022 – December 2022 (summary enclosed).

ABSENCE – 1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 DECEMBER 2022

Members are advised that absence at the end of December was above target by 2.45 days with 11.67 average days lost per employee against a target of 9.22 days. Covid absence is not included in the reported figures.

A number of long term absence cases have resulted in employees exhausting their sick pay entitlement and although no additional cost is incurred by the Council during the 'no pay' periods – these days lost are still included in the absence figures.

If days lost to employees who were not in receipt of sick pay were not included in the absence figures, the average days lost per employee at the end of December 2022 would have been 9.82 days.

Analysis of this month's absence figures has highlighted the following:

Long term absence

- Accounts for 87% of the absence figures compared to 88% in the previous month indicating a continued reduction in long term absence.
- The main reason for long term absence has changed to the 'Other' category" of absence.
- 41% of these long term cases are more challenging to manage including hospital procedures, disability related illness, broken bones and road traffic accidents.
- 4 long term cases have exhausted their sick pay entitlement. This reduction is realised following the confirmation of two cases being eligible for ill health.
- A further 3 long term cases returned in December resulting in the total to date of 43 long term cases that have returned to work.

Formal Case Reviews

Formal Case reviews (FCRs) are normally held where all possible steps have been taken and have failed to secure the employee's return to work within a maximum of 9 months.
Completed to date

- From 1 April 2022 to date, 5 Formal Case Reviews have been concluded through either a return to work or leaving the organisation.

In progress

- 2 FCRs are at appeal stage.
- A further 6 absence cases are at Formal Case Review stage as follows:

  ➢ 1 in progress,
  ➢ 3 exploring ill health retirement
  ➢ 2 to be progressed as the outcome of Employee Relations cases have been concluded.

Short term absence

- Accounts for 13% of the absence figures with the increase closely linked to the minor illnesses typical of the season.
- The main reasons for absence are
    o Cold/flu, stomach bug – accounting for 53% of short term absence
    o Stress Depression, Mental Health
    o Chest and respiratory issues
    o Musculoskeletal problems
    o Back and neck problems
    o Infection

It is noted that absence related to stress (including work related stress) has increased from 36% to 44% of the overall absence (both long term and short term). The Council remains focused on encouraging health and wellbeing in the workplace, and continues to promote the Mental Health and Wellbeing through STAYWELL, the promotion of the Northern Region Recovery College courses and the Employee Assistance Programme through Inspire offering 24/7 confidential support in addition to training of over 40 mental health champions to support across the organisation.

100% attendance
For the period 1 April 2022 to December 2022, 66% of employees had full attendance.

Ongoing actions

- The HR Business Partnership team continues to work closely with Managers and Occupational Health on an individual case management basis, encouraging prompt action from Managers is prioritised to keep absences within target.
- The Head of HR and HR Manager continue to hold bi-monthly meetings with the directorates with the highest levels of absence, namely Parks & Leisure, Waste Operations and Community Planning. The relevant Directors, Deputy Directors & Heads of Service attend. These meetings cover in depth analysis of absence cases and the associated reasons, to agree next steps for complex cases and to schedule formal case reviews where appropriate. Following the recent conclusion of two employee relations cases, these

formal case reviews will be progressed. General feedback remains positive with the targeted focus valued.

- Monthly case management discussion meetings are scheduled to review complex cases with an Occupational Health consultant. Case managers attend these sessions to ensure effective use of the Occupational Health service and to support earlier returns to work where possible.
- Several training sessions have taken place for managers within Parks on how to effectively manage their absence caseloads. Absence management toolkits are also under development to further assist managers.
- Development continues for an online training module on the importance of attending work. This will be rolled out to new staff initially and then across the wider organisation in 2023.
- Continued delivery of the Wellbeing Calendar.
- The weekly STAY MORE CONNECTED communication is being used to share and promote information to staff on up and coming Wellness events and courses and to target initiatives linked to the top five reasons for absence.
- Continued provision of physiotherapy services for appropriate cases (back and musculoskeletal related absence)

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Reviewed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

6.4   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.

<u>**SECTION 75 AND RURAL SCREENINGS**</u>

The policies noted below have been screened between October to December 2022.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Garden of Remembrance Sixmile Cemetery	1
Commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III	1

<u>**RETROSPECTIVE SCREENINGS**</u>

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)	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, Accessibility and Customer Services Officer

Agreed by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Reviewed by: Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

6.5 CCS/CS/006 COMMUNICATIONS & CUSTOMER CHANNELS REPORT

Members are reminded that the Corporate Recovery & Improvement Plan for 2022-23 sets out the following Performance Improvement Target, "*We will achieve high levels of customer satisfaction*".

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the indicators that the Plan set out as measurements of progress towards this target covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2022.

We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services:
Each issue of the Borough Life magazine has a specific, themed survey, and within each one, residents are asked to rate their satisfaction with Council services.
The October issue of Borough Life, contained a "*Feeling Safe in our Borough*" survey, with **87.4%** satisfaction rating from respondents. During November, the Halloween events survey also gathered responses from residents, returning **95.8%** satisfaction.
The cumulative satisfaction figure for 2022-23 is **92.7%.**

Further surveys during quarter four will include a targeted consultation of residents attending the Enchanted Winter Garden, feedback on the Council's Corporate Plan, and within January's issue of Borough Life, "Cleanliness of the Borough".

2021-22	Target 2022-23	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
87.5%	80%	N/A	89.8%	93.2%

The percentage of abandoned calls will be 6.5% (or less):
A total of **45,337** calls were presented during quarter three, a decrease of **2.6%** compared to **46,544** in quarter two, with a total of **135,356** calls during the year to date. There were **173,660** calls during 2021-22.
The overall percentage for abandoned calls for the year is **5.1%.**

2021-22	Target 2022-23	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
6.0%	6.5%	5.0%	4.7%	5.5%

We have achieved at least 600,000 online transactions:

Officers continue to promote and monitor the shift of transactions to an online basis, where practical and beneficial. For the purposes of maintaining consistency with previous benchmarks, this indicator focuses upon the number of online transactions including:

- Caravan bookings
- Online theatre and events bookings
- Leisure bookings

- Dog licensing applications
- Bulky waste bookings

By the end of December 2022, there had been **620,918** online transactions, which is **3.5%** above target for the year. There was an increase in online theatre and events bookings with the release of Enchanted Winter Garden tickets during quarters two and three.

2021-22	Target 2022-2023	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
652,593	600,000	176,882	235,715	208,321

There are at least 5,062 downloads of the Residents App:

Downloads of the ANBorough App are measured through official app stores (Google and Apple) and total **9,910** in 2022-23, this is **95.8%** above target for the year.

2021-22	Target 2022-23	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	October
14,481	5,062	3,475	3,531	2,904

The performance of the Corporate Recovery & Improvement Policy 2022-23 will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Policy & Governance and Audit Risk Committees, and within the Annual Report on Performance 2022-23 (Self-Assessment), which will be reviewed by Council and published on the Council's website by 30 September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report is noted.

Prepared by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Agreed by: Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

6.6   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 and published on the Council's website.

A summary sheet has been prepared showing the total attendance for the period June 2022 to November 2022 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 June 2022 to November 2022, be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (Interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

6.7   G/DOFI/2   QUARTERLY REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

A report has been prepared on requests received in the third quarter of the year (1 October to 31 December 2022) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this is enclosed.

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

- The number of requests received was equivalent to the number in the same period the previous year.

- Of the 71 requests received, 57 were under FOI, 12 under EIR and 2 under DPA.

- 58 requests were completed within the quarter.

- 90% 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, Finance (19), Environmental Health (16), HR (10), Governance (10), Planning (9), and Community Planning (9).

- Three appeals were received during the quarter. In two of these appeals the Council's original decision was upheld. In the third appeal the requester amended their request and so it was possible to provide the requested information.

- One complaint to the ICO was notified within the quarter. The Council responded to the complainant and the ICO within the timescale. The ICO has confirmed that no further action is required.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (Interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance