2 October 2025

Committee Chairperson:	Councillor B Webb
Committee Vice-Chairperson:	Councillor H Magill
Committee Members:	Aldermen – P Bradley and M Cosgrove Councillors – J Burbank, M Cooper, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan, P Dunlop, M Goodman, N Kelly, A McAuley, T McGrann V McWilliam and A O'Lone

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 7 October 2025 at 6.30pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

Richard Baker, GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim and 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

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3 PRESENTATION

3.1 FI/GEN/027 RESILIENCE – ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS

1. Purpose

An update on Resilience, and the role of Elected Members will be presented at the meeting.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared by: Elaine Girvan, Head of Health, Safety and Resilience

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to approve and note the Dual Language Street Sign applications as follows:

Stage 1
- **Arthur Crescent, BT36 7AL, be approved**

Stage 2
- **Arthur Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7EH be noted**
- **Arthur Park, Newtownabbey, BT36 7EL be noted**
- **Gallagh Road, Toome, BT41 3PD be noted**

Stage 3 - no applications at stage 3 be noted.

2. Background

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

3. Application Update

STAGE 1: PETITION VERIFICATION

One application has been received at Stage 1, requesting signage to be erected in Irish for the following area:

1. ARTHUR CRESCENT, BT36 7AL

The occupiers signing the petitions have been evidenced by their listing on the current Electoral Register and meet the one-third threshold as required within the Policy.

STAGE 2: RESIDENTS CANVASS - there are three applications at stage 2.

1. ARTHUR ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7EH
2. ARTHUR PARK, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7EL
3. GALLAGH ROAD, TOOME, BT41 3PD

Canvass letters have been issued to the above residents, the outcome of which will be reported to Members.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION - there are no applications at stage 3.

Maps and costs are enclosed for information.

4. Recommendation

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

Stage 1

- **Arthur Crescent, BT36 7AL, be approved**

Stage 2

- **Arthur Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7EH be noted**
- **Arthur Park, Newtownabbey, BT36 7EL be noted**
- **Gallagh Road, Toome, BT41 3PD be noted**

Stage 3 - no applications at stage 3 be noted.

Prepared by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

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

4.2 G/MSMO/031 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL 1 JANUARY 2026 – 31 DECEMBER 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members the approval of the Schedule of Meetings for the period 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2026.

2. Introduction

It is standard practice for the Schedule of Meetings for the year from 1 January to 31 December to be approved by Members.

3. Schedule

The following schedule of dates for Council and Committee meetings are proposed for the period 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2026.

Meetings marked in red are held at Antrim Civic Centre, while those in black are held at Mossley Mill. All meetings commence at 6.30 pm with the exception of the Planning Committee which will start at 6 pm.

Council/Committee Meetings	Date of Meeting
Operations Committee	Monday 5 January 2026
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 6 January 2026
Community Development Committee	Monday 12 January 2026
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 13 January 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 19 January 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 26 January 2026
Operations Committee	Monday 2 February 2026
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 3 February 2026
Community Development Committee	Monday 9 February 2026
Special Council Meeting	Monday 9 February 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 16 February 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 23 February 2026
Operations Committee	Monday 2 March 2026
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 3 March 2026
Community Development Committee	Monday 9 March 2026
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 10 March 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 16 March 2026
Audit and Risk Committee	Wednesday 18 March 2026*
Council Meeting	Monday 30 March 2026

Operations Committee	Monday 13 April 2026*
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 14 April 2026*
Community Development Committee	Wednesday 15 April 2026*
Planning Committee	Monday 20 April 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 27 April 2026
Operations Committee	Tuesday 5 May 2026*
Policy and Governance Committee	Wednesday 6 May 2026*
Community Development Committee	Monday 11 May 2026
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 12 May 2026
Planning Meeting	Monday 18 May 2026
Council Meeting	Tuesday 26 May 2026*
Annual Council Meeting	Monday 1 June 2026
Operations Committee	Monday 8 June 2026*
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 9 June 2026*
Community Development Committee	Monday 15 June 2026*
Planning Committee	Monday 22 June 2026*
Audit and Risk Committee	Tuesday 23 June 2026*
Council Meeting	Monday 29 June 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 20 July 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 27 July 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 17 August 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 24 August 2026*
Operations Committee	Monday 7 September 2026
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 8 September 2026
Community Development Committee	Monday 14 September 2026
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 15 September 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 21 September 2026
Audit and Risk Committee	Tuesday 22 September 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 28 September 2026
Operations Committee	Monday 5 October 2026
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 6 October 2026
Community Development Committee	Monday 12 October 2026

Planning Committee	Monday 19 October 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 26 October 2026
Operations Committee	Monday 2 November 2026
Policy and Governance Committee	Tuesday 3 November 2026
Community Development Committee	Monday 9 November 2026
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 10 November 2026
Planning Committee	Monday 16 November 2026
Council Meeting	Monday 30 November 2026
Operations Committee	Monday 7 December 2026
Policy and Governance	Tuesday 8 December 2026
Community Development Committee	Wednesday 9 December 2026*
Planning Committee	Monday 14 December 2026*
Audit and Risk Committee	Tuesday 15 December 2026*
Council Meeting	Monday 21 December 2026*

** Denotes change of date due to bank/public holiday/annual meeting*

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Schedule of Meetings for the period 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2026 be approved.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.3 G-LEG-38-118 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS – USE OF A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Purpose

At the December 2023 Policy and Governance Committee, Members resolved to establish a Working Group to review the Council's current Standing Orders, membership being the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Party Group Leaders or their nominees, and Officers.

The aim of the Working Group is, on a task and finish principle, to make recommendations for the revision of the Council's Standing Orders to make them relevant to the current modern governance arrangements.

Therefore, the purpose of this report is to bring an amendment to Standing Orders for Members' consideration regarding the use of a language other than English at Council meetings.

2. Legal position

There are a number of laws which promote the use of and protection of regional and minority languages which includes Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh and Ulster Scots.

Examples of the some of the relevant laws which Officers have had regard to are as follows:

- **The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998:** strand three of the Agreement contains a series of commitments in respect of economic, cultural and social issues, including a general provision relating to minority languages:

- All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

- The Agreement commits the British Government to take resolute action to promote the language, to facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand and to seek to remove restrictions which would work against the maintenance and development of the language.

- **The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022:** provides legal recognition for the Irish and Ulster Scots languages, and creates new bodies to oversee their use and promote cultural expression. The Act established an Irish Language Commissioner, an Ulster Scots and Ulster British Commissioner, and an Office of Identity and Cultural Expression. When the Commissioners provide guidance which is thereafter ratified, Officers will bring a report to Members for consideration.

- **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**: seeks to protect and promote regional and minority languages in Europe. The Irish language is included in the Charter, which was ratified by the UK Government in 2001. The UK Government included the Irish language as one of three languages (Scottish Gaelic and Welsh being the other two) registered under Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. However, it is not legally binding on the Council.

3. Conclusion

Having regard to the relevant laws, the speaking of a language other than English, particularly Irish and Ulster Scots in this jurisdiction, by authorised third party speakers and Councillors in the Council Chambers should not be prohibited.

In order to prevent discrimination, Councils are obliged to provide reasonable adjustments. Therefore, if an authorised third party speaker or a Councillor does not proficiently speak and understand English then the Council should facilitate, where reasonable and practicable, their ability to understand and be understood at a Council meeting.

There is no law which currently states that a Council in Northern Ireland must provide interpretation facilities for authorised third party speakers or Councillors who wish to speak at a Council meeting in a language other than English when they can proficiently speak and understand English. Such a request for interpretation services in that situation could be viewed as being unreasonable.

Therefore, where an authorised third party speaker(s) or a Councillor(s) wishes to speak in a language other than English at a Council meeting, and they can proficiently speak and understand English, it would be lawful and reasonable to request that they provide a verbatim oral translation immediately thereafter.

A section 75 screening form in relation to the recommendation is enclosed and the advice is that the recommended amendment to Standing Orders is not subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members agree to amend Standing Orders to add the following:

a) It is important that all Members and the public can be understood and understand what is being said at all Council meetings.

b) If any Member wishes to speak in a language other than English at a Council meeting, they must provide a verbatim oral translation immediately thereafter.

c) This will also apply to any other party who is invited to speak at a Council meeting.

d) Without the above said translation, a statement in a language other than English cannot be understood by all and will not be recorded in the Council meeting minutes.

e) The Council may provide reasonable adjustments, when required and where practicable, to facilitate the use of a language other than English at Council meetings where the authorised speaker cannot proficiently speak and understand English.

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

Approved by: Richard Baker, Chief Executive

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 CCS/EDP/10 NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE GUIDANCE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to note the publication of the Local Government Staff Commission's Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance document following consultation.

2. Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance Document

Members are reminded that at their meeting in June 2025 they approved the Council's consultation response to the Local Government Staff Commission's Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance Consultation.

The Commission reviewed the consultation feedback and has now issued their final Guidance (enclosed).

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Local Government Staff Commission's Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance be noted.

Prepared by: Claire Webb, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

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

5.2 G/MSMO/2/VOL2 CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE BY THE ALLIANCE PARTY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the change in membership of the Economic Development Committee by the Alliance Party.

2. Introduction

Members will recall agreeing membership of the Economic Development Committee for Year 3 at the Annual Meeting in June 2025.

At the meeting, the Alliance Party nominated Councillor J Burbank to the Committee along with Councillor B Webb.

3. Key Issue

The Alliance Party Nominating Officer has now advised that, with immediate effect, Councillor N Kelly is to replace Councillor J Burbank on this Committee for the remainder of Year 3 of Council.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the change in membership of the Economic Development Committee by the Alliance Party for the remainder of Year 3 of Council.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.3 CCS/EDP/023 DEAF FRIENDLY COUNCIL DFC SIGN LANGUAGE PARTNERSHIP GROUP (SLPG) FUNDING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Members note the formal letter of offer of £10,708 to deliver BSL training.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded of the Council's commitment to become a Deaf Friendly Council through our signing of the BSL and ISL Deaf Charter.

3. Key Issues (or the relevant titles for the main body of the report)

In support of the Charter and our deaf community, an application was submitted to the Department for Communities (DfC) Sign Language Partnership Group (SLPG) for 100% funding of £10,708 to deliver BSL Level One and Level Two Sign Language Training for Elected Members, Council Staff and Borough Residents.

A formal letter of offer for £10,708 has been approved and offered by the DfC (enclosed)

4. Governance

An expression of interest will be circulated to Staff and Elected Members to ascertain interested participants. In addition, residents will be invited to express their interest through social media channels and community groups.

Applications will be assessed and allocated, with successful applicants invited to attend, with all courses delivered by 31 March 2026.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the formal letter of offer of £10,708 to deliver BSL training.

Prepared by: Claire Webb, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

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

5.4 CCS/EDP/010 AUTISM IMPACT AWARD

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Members note Council's re-accreditation of the Autism Impact Award

2. Background

Members are reminded that a key action within the Council's Disability Action Plan 2020-2025 is to secure re-accreditation as an Autism Impact Award Champion council (Autism Friendly Council).

The Council initially attained accreditation in 2019. The Autism NI Impact Award is a CPD certified training package that supports organisations to create truly autism-accessible environments and is a mark of excellence, demonstrating commitment to inclusion and active support for Neurodivergent people in society

3. Key Points

As part of the re-accreditation process employees received tailored training from Autism NI and implemented a bespoke action plan of adjustments across the Council, to build an inclusive service and workplace.

Achievement of the Autism NI's Impact Award, demonstrates Council's commitment to inclusion for autistic and neurodivergent customers and employees.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the re-accreditation of the Autism Impact Award

Prepared by: Claire Webb, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

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

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) may be taken at this point.