



2 January 2025

Committee Chairperson: Councillor A O'Lone

Committee Vice-Chairperson: Alderman L Boyle

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

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

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 6.30pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

Richard Baker, GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

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

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

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**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 7 JANUARY 2025**

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 FI/FIN/11 ESTIMATES UPDATE PRESENTATION

1. Purpose

An update on the 2025/26 Estimates for the Organisation Development and Finance and Governance Departments will be presented at the meeting.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 G/MSMO/1 SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS 2024-25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors 2024-25 for approval.

2. Introduction/Background

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.

3. Key Issues

Circular LG 15/2024 Consolidated Councillor Allowances – Updated December 2024, **enclosed**, has been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) reflecting an increase in the maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2024 and an increase in the maximum rates for Dependants' Carers' Allowance applicable from 1 April 2025. The Council's Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors has been updated to show the new maximum rates applied from the valid dates.

All previously agreed Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Special Responsibility Allowances **enclosed** have been increased by 2.50% in line with the increase in the Basic Allowance.

Any future notifications from the DfC in relation to changes to the allowances payable for the 2024-25 financial year shall be reported to Members for their approval.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for 2024-25 be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.2 CP/GEN/049 NEW GRANT FUNDING POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the new Grant Funding Policy.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council currently issues approximately £1.5 million in grant funding to individuals, groups and organisations through a range of grant funding programmes operated by various departments and sections of the Council.

The Council does not currently have a policy in relation to grant funding. Through the establishment of a Grant Funding Policy, there are opportunities to improve governance, streamline processes, remove duplication of effort, thereby delivering more for the community in funding support.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The establishment of a Grant Funding Hub, initiated by the recruitment of a Grant Funding Hub Manager was approved at the Policy and Governance Committee in April 2024.

Once appointed this Officer would be responsible for the development of the Grant Funding Hub including Grant Policy and Grant Programme guidelines for all funding streams.

An update on this was presented to Members at a Corporate Workshop on Grant Funding held in Mossley Mill on 19 December 2024.

4. Key Issues

The purpose of the Grant Funding Policy is to set out the principles, criteria and governance procedures for the funding of external bodies and to support delivery of the Council's strategic aims and objectives.

The Grant funding policy aims to have a streamlined, equitable, customer-focused process, encompassing appropriate assessment, evaluation and monitoring systems.

In consultation with various departments, the Grant Funding Policy has been developed by Officers and a draft of the policy is **enclosed** for Members' information.

5. Governance

There is currently a range of grant funding programmes in place across the Council. A single grant funding policy for Council and individual grant programme guidance and procedures which are service-specific but also

compliant with policy will support the delivery of a robust, consistent and corporate approach to grant funding.

Officers will review the Policy on an annual basis. Any further proposed updates to the Policy will be brought to a future Committee meeting for approval.

6. Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Proofing

Members are advised that a Section 75 Equality Screening exercise and Rural Proofing of the Grant Funding Policy has been carried out with the forms **enclosed**; there is no requirement to carry out full Equality Impact or Rural Needs Assessments.

7. Summary

The Council approved the establishment of a Grant Funding Hub in April 2024. A new Grant Funding Policy is recommended for approval. The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and any updates to the Policy brought to Committee for approval. A Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing exercise on the Grant Funding Policy has been carried out.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- (a) the draft Grant Funding Policy be approved.**
- (b) the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing carried out for the Grant Funding Policy be approved.**

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Funding Hub Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development and Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.3 PT/CI/066 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025/26 DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 for consultation.

2. Background

Members are reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Annually, the Council produces a draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan for consultation. This sets out a range of robust performance targets, along with identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets.

4. Key Points

The draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (**enclosed**) sets out 7 statutory targets, 31 performance targets and 6 improvement objectives.

The draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 is subject to a 12-week public consultation, which will commence on 6 February 2025, for the purpose of obtaining feedback on improvement objectives from stakeholders.

A summary of the consultation responses will be presented for Members' information at the June 2025 Policy and Governance Committee. The feedback from the consultation will be considered for incorporation into the Plan prior to the publication of the final approved Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26, which will be published on the Council's website before 30 June 2025.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 for consultation be approved.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

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

4.4 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. Purpose

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

Stage 1

- Longlands Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 7NE be approved.
- Glebecoole Park, Newtownabbey, BT36 6HX be noted.

Stage 2

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

Two applications are at Stage 1.

1. LONGLANDS AVENUE, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 7NE

The occupiers signing the petition for the street above have been verified against the current Electoral Register and satisfy the one-third threshold as required within the approved Policy.

2. GLEBECOOLE PARK, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 6HX

The occupiers signing the petition for the street above have been verified against the current Electoral Register and do not satisfy the one-third threshold as required within the approved Policy.

STAGE 2: RESIDENTS CANVASS

Three applications are at Stage 2.

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

Canvass letters have been issued to residents of the above streets with January 2025 return dates and the outcome will be reported to Members in due course.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION

There are no applications at stage 3.

4. Recommendation

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

Stage 1

- **Longlands Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 7NE be approved.**
- **Glebecoole Park, Newtownabbey, BT36 6HX be noted.**

Stage 2

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

Stage 3

- **No applications at stage 3 be noted.**

Prepared by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

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

4.5 FI/FA/6 MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2025/26

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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 2025.

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 2025/26 is **enclosed**.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy 2025/26 be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.6 FIN/GEN/2 COUNCIL RESERVES POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to approve the Council's Reserves Policy (enclosed).

2. Background

Council maintains a number of reserves that are categorised as 'usable' and 'non-usable'. Non-usable reserves are maintained for statutory purposes and proper accounting practice. Usable reserves comprise General Reserves and various other reserves that have a specific purpose. It is important that General Reserves are maintained at an appropriate level to provide:

- a working balance;
- a contingency for unexpected events; and
- a means of building up funds to meet an expected requirement.

A listing of the current value, adequacy and use of all Council's reserves is described in the policy.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council Reserves Policy be approved.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.7 FI/FIN/032 ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION TO THE BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek an additional nomination to the Belfast Hills Partnership for the year 2024/2025.

2. Background

The Belfast Hills Partnership was established to assist in the protection and conservation of the Belfast Hills, including Carnmoney Hill, for the benefit of the public and those who live, work and own land in the area. The Partnership meet approximately four times per year at various locations.

Councillor McAuley was nominated as the Council's representative for the year 2024/2025 at the Annual Meeting held in June 2024.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Annual Meeting on 30 May 2023, it was requested that Council write to a number of outside bodies including Belfast Hills Partnership to request if there would be an opportunity to afford additional representation. Belfast Hills Partnership had responded at the time that this request required a change in their Articles of Association.

4. New Nomination

Correspondence has now been received from Belfast Hills Partnership to confirm that they would be delighted to offer Council **two** places on their Board.

Members are requested to nominate an additional representative for the remainder of this year.

Body	No of Positions	Agreed Term	Nomination
Belfast Hills Partnership	2	Annual	Councillor A McAuley Additional Nomination

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members provide a nomination to fill the additional position afforded to Council on the Belfast Hills Partnership for the year 2024/2025.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5 ITEM FOR NOTING

5.1 G/MSMO/41 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS – JUNE TO NOVEMBER 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of Members' attendance for each of the Council meetings and Committee Member attendance for each of the Committee meetings, from June to November 2024, prior to publication on the Council's website.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that at the Policy and Governance Committee meeting in February 2017 it had been agreed that six monthly attendance records for each of the Council and Committee meetings would be summarised and published on the Council's website.

At the Policy and Governance Committee meeting in September 2024 it was agreed that the summary attendance sheet would be updated to record in-person and remote attendance at meetings.

A summary sheet has been prepared showing the total attendance for each of the Council and Committee meetings for the period 1 June to 30 November 2024 (**enclosed**).

3. Recommendation

It is recommended 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 June to 30 November 2024 be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance