



3 April 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 8 April 2025 at 6.30pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Baker'.

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 8 APRIL 2025**

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 OD/OD/004 ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

1. Purpose

The Organisation Development Team will provide Members with an update on the Employee Engagement Framework, and the recent initiatives and outcomes.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

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

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 PT/CI/068 BUSINESS PLANS 2025/2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the Organisation Development and Finance and Governance Business Plans 2025/26.

2. Background

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

Specifically, the duties in the Act relate to Section 84(1), 85(2) and 85(9) whereby the Council has a statutory duty to make arrangements to:

- Secure continuous improvement;
- Secure achievement of its improvement objectives and
- Exercise its functions so that any Departmental specified standards are met.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In January 2025 the Council approved a strategic performance framework as part of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (draft for consultation).

4. Business Planning

Business planning plays a vital role in the Council's performance management and delivery processes. It offers a more efficient and cohesive approach to monitoring and evaluating performance while improving overall visibility.

The purpose of the Directorate Business Plans are to:

- Demonstrate how each of the Directorates are supporting and achieving Council's priorities.
- Provide a clear sense of purpose of the Directorate and the challenges it faces.
- Illustrate how it is aligning its resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Measure performance and hold ourselves to account to ensure we deliver for the Council and its residents.

Business Plans for Organisation Development and Finance and Governance are **enclosed** for approval.

5. Financial Position/Implications

As agreed as part of the Council's rate setting process

6. Governance

Progress reports on the Council's Directorate Business Plans 2025/26 will be reported quarterly to relevant Committees.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members consider and approve the:

- **Organisation Development Directorate Business Plan 2025-26**
- **Finance and Governance Directorate Business Plan 2025-26**

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Organisation Development (Interim) and Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.2 F1/FIN/10 AMENDMENT TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend the approval of the updated Financial Regulations and Council Constitution.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that Council regularly review the Financial Regulations to ensure a high level of governance is in place in relation to financial activity. Amendments to the financial regulations were last approved at the Policy and Governance Committee in December 2024.

The Financial Regulations form part of the financial framework of Council which provides the necessary control on financial matters, whilst encouraging best practice and promoting local accountability.

The Financial Regulations provide a framework through which the Chief Executive can be satisfied that proper financial administration is in place. The aim of these Regulations is to help ensure that high standards of propriety and best value are achieved. All Elected Members and employees have a duty to promote these aims, not just by following Financial Regulations but in their general approach.

3. Review of the Regulations and Constitution

Minister O'Dowd announced on the 6th March that the £30,000 threshold for the public advertisement of procurements be raised to £50,000 with immediate effect.

In addition to the above, the opportunity was taken to review the Financial Regulations and to update accordingly.

3.1 Financial Regulations Amendments

A number of amendments to the Financial Regulation have therefore been drafted and are summarised below:

Section	Amendment
Section 7	The maximum procurement threshold for public procurements is raised from £30,000 to £50,000.
Section 16	Additional point 16.9 - All electronic funds transfer payments must follow a dual authorisation process of authorised signatories.
All sections	Minor amendments to wording and related policy titles and dates

A copy of the proposed updated Financial Regulations is **enclosed** for approval.

3.2 Council Constitution Amendments

The 'Constitution of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council' delegates power to CLT to procure goods, services or works under the limit of £30,000 without committee approval where the procurement is:

- in relation to matters of a routine or recurring nature; or
- in relation to the operational requirements of the Department provided that it is not of an unusual or controversial nature; or
- contained within an agreed Council plan

It is recommended following Minister O'Dowd's announcement that the Council Constitution, be amended to reflect the increase of the threshold to £50,000.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the updated Financial Regulations and an update to the Council's Constitution be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance & Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Richard Baker, Chief Executive

4.3 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. Purpose

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

Stage 1	Glen Manor View, Newtownabbey, BT36 7GE be approved. Longlands Mews, Newtownabbey, BT36 7FR be approved.
Stage 2	No applications, be noted.
Stage 3	Longlands Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 7FD, be approved.

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 have been received at Stage 1.

1. GLEN MANOR VIEW, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7GE
2. LONGLANDS MEWS, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7FR

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

STAGE 2: RESIDENTS CANVASS

There are currently no applications at Stage 2.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION

One application has been progressed to Stage 3.

1. LONGLANDS AVENUE, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7FD

The occupiers of the above street have been canvassed and the threshold of two thirds or more in favour of the erection of a second language street sign has been met as required within the approved Policy.

A map and outline costings are enclosed.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Dual Language Street Sign applications be approved and noted as follows:

Stage 1	Glen Manor View, Newtownabbey, BT36 7GE be approved. Longlands Mews, Newtownabbey, BT36 7FR be approved.
Stage 2	No applications, be noted.
Stage 3	Longlands Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 7FD, be approved.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

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

4.4 G/MSMO/1 SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS 2025-26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors 2025-26 for approval.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that 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

Correspondence has been received **enclosed**, from the Department for Communities (DfC) following a recent review of Councillors roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in a 5% increase in the maximum rates for Basic Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2025. The Council's Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors has been updated **enclosed** to show the new maximum rates applied from the valid dates.

As of 1 April 2025, the Basic Responsibility Allowance will be £18,329 (this includes the allowance for incidentals and consumables).

Any future notifications from the DfC in relation to changes to the allowances payable for the 2025-26 financial year shall be reported to Members for their approval.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for 2025-26 be approved.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Richard Baker, Chief Executive

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 CCS/EDP/007 QUARTERLY SCREENING REPORT AND RURAL SCREENING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the quarterly Section 75 and Rural Screenings for the period November 2024 to February 2025.

2. Background

As part of the Council's 2023-2026 Equality Scheme & Action Plan, quarterly updates on policy screenings under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are conducted for all new and revised policies. When necessary and appropriate, these policies may also be subject to additional equality impact assessment.

3. Section 75 and Rural Screenings

The policies noted below have been screened between November 2024 – February 2025.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Parental Bereavement Leave Policy	1
Grant Funding Policy	1

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

Enclosed are the retrospective Section 75 and Rural Screening for the review of the Household Recycling Centre Opening Hours.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the quarterly Section 75 and Rural Screenings for the period November 2024 to February 2025 be noted.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

Approved by: Helen Hall, Interim Director of Organisation Development

5.2 OD/OD/002 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the minutes of the Elected Member Development Working Group meeting on Monday 10 February 2025.

A copy of the minutes of the meeting are **enclosed** for information.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of the Elected Member Development Working Group meeting on Monday 10 February 2025 be noted.

Prepared by: Sarah Fenton, Organisation Development Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development and Employee Engagement Manager

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

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Members are advised that any Other Relevant Business (AORB) may be taken at this point.