



10 June 2022

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, A McAuley, T McGrann, B Mallon
N Ramsay, V Robinson, B Webb and R Wilson

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 6.30pm.**

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

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9034 0048 / 028 9448 1301

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee Funding Strategy Statement

3.2 Corporate Planning Workshop 2022

4 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 Members Attendance at Meetings

4.2 Budget report April 2022 – Period 01

4.3 Elected Member Development Working Group Minutes

4.4 Agency Staff Update

4.5 Managing Attendance

4.6 Quarterly Screening Report and Rural Screening

4.7 Communications & Customers Channel Report

4.8 Changes in Group Leader and Nominating Officer by Democratic Unionist Party and Alliance Party

4.9 Corporate Recovery and Improvement Plan 2022-23 Consultation

4.10 Performance Improvement Statutory Indicator for the Department for the Economy

4.11 Child Funeral Fund for Northern Ireland

4.12 Framework and Timeframe for the Development of a Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for the Local Government Sector

4.13 Appointment of Independent Members to The Northern Ireland Policing Board – Correspondence from the Minister of Justice

5 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

5.1 Procurement Tender Report & Award of Contracts

5.2 Chief Executive's Performance Appraisal

5.3 Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Redundancy

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 4 MAY 2022

3. ITEM FOR DECISION

3.1 FI/FIN/015 NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT

Members are advised that a draft 'Funding Strategy Statement (FSS)' has been received from Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) for consideration by Council (enclosed).

The funding strategy is updated every three years in parallel with the triennial valuation of the pension scheme.

Preparation and publication of the FSS is a statutory requirement; its purpose is to document the framework through which NILGOSC will ensure that contributions are sufficient to meet pension obligations both now and in the future.

Updates from the previous September 2019 statement include:

- Amendments arising from legislative updates
- Narrative amendments to provide clarity on more technical aspects
- Amendments to reflect changes to the statement of investment principles
-

All updates have been minor in nature. A draft response is enclosed for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: that the draft response be approved.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

3.2 PT/CI/035 CORPORATE PLANNING WORKSHOP 2022

Members are reminded that an annual Corporate Planning Workshop is held to review strategic performance.

It is proposed that the following options are considered for the 2022 Workshop.

- a) That the Corporate Planning Workshop is held on Friday 4th November 2022 between 9.15am and 4pm or Friday 2nd December 2022 between 9.15am and 4pm.
- b) That the Corporate Planning Workshop is held over two half days on Friday 4th November 2022 and Friday 2nd December 2022 between 9.15am and 12.30pm.

Members' instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Denise Lynn, PA to Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

Agreed by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

4 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 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 December 2021 to May 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 December 2021 to May 2022 be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

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

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

4.2 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – APRIL 2022 – Period 01

A budget report for April 2022 – Period 01 is enclosed for Members information.

The Council's financial position at the end of April 2022 shows a favourable variance of £306k.

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, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance & Governance

4.3 G/MSMO/27 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Members are advised that a meeting of the Member Development Working Group took place on Monday 9 May 2022 and a copy of the minutes are enclosed for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

4.4 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.

Current Agency staff

The table appended provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at April 2022 compared to April 2019 (pre covid-19). It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (**enclosed** at appendix 1). 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:

- the number of agency workers has reduced from 67 in April 2019 to 53 in April 2022
- there are less agency workers covering sickness absence and vacancies on structures
- agency workers are used more to provide ad-hoc cover

Cost of Agency

Enclosed at appendix 2 is the expenditure on agency workers in April 2022.

The cost of agency staff has increased for the period of 1 April 2022 to 30 April 2022 at 7% of all staffing costs compared to 4.94% for the same period in 2019/2020 (pre covid).

The increased costs are impacted by:

- the 1.75% NJC pay increase that is also applicable to agency workers
- increase in National Insurance of 1.25% from 6 April 2022

In 2022/2023

While there are currently 21 Seasonal Grounds Maintenance workers in place the agency is working to provide further agency cover.

As the Summer Schemes are resuming in July and August 2022 one agency has been engaged to recruit 50 Summer Scheme Leader roles to support these schemes.

It continues to be challenging to fill roles through the agencies due to the current labour market and we are directly recruiting and filling a number of operational vacancies that are currently covered by agency workers.

We would anticipate that going forward we will use agency workers for more ad hoc, seasonal, temporary cover.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Pauline Greer, Human Resources Manager

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

4.5 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE

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

ABSENCE – APRIL 2021 TO MAY 2022

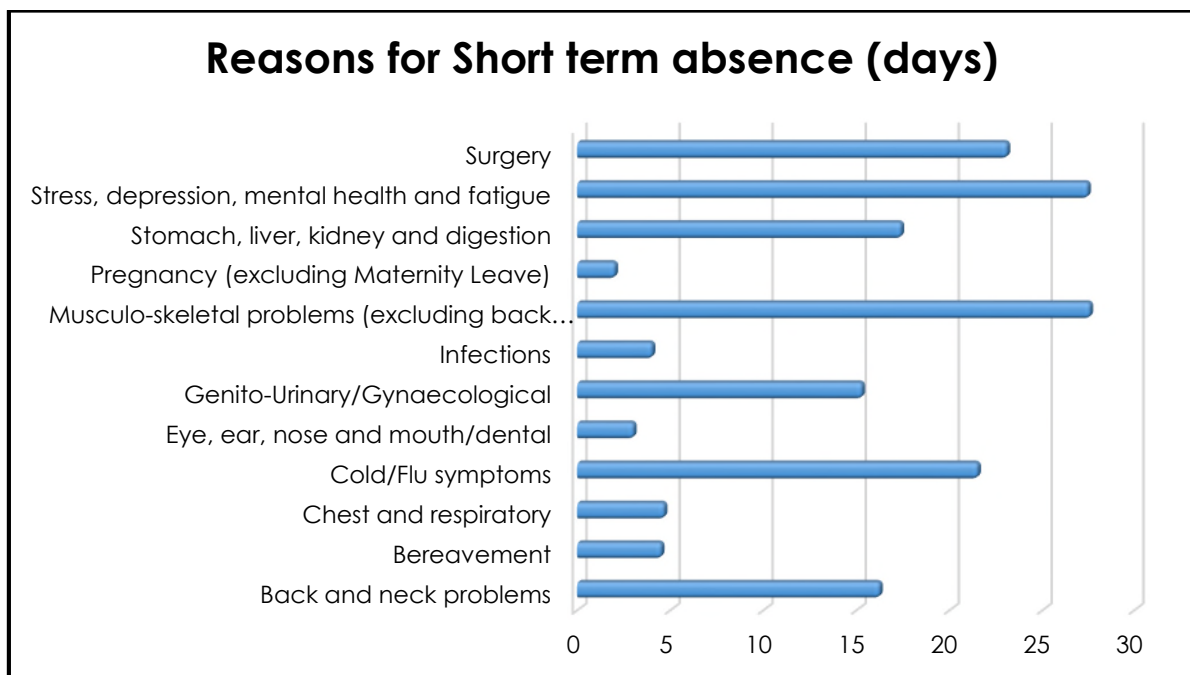
Members are advised that sickness absence at the end of May 2022 was 2.4 average days per employee against a target of 2.06 days.

There has been a small increase in 100% attendance with 89% of staff achieving this compared to 87% for the same period in 2021/22.

The prevalence and impact of long covid continues as a significant concern and will likely continue to impact absence levels in the year ahead. In this reporting period, covid related absences outside of the 10 day isolation period accounted for 49 days.

Short term absence

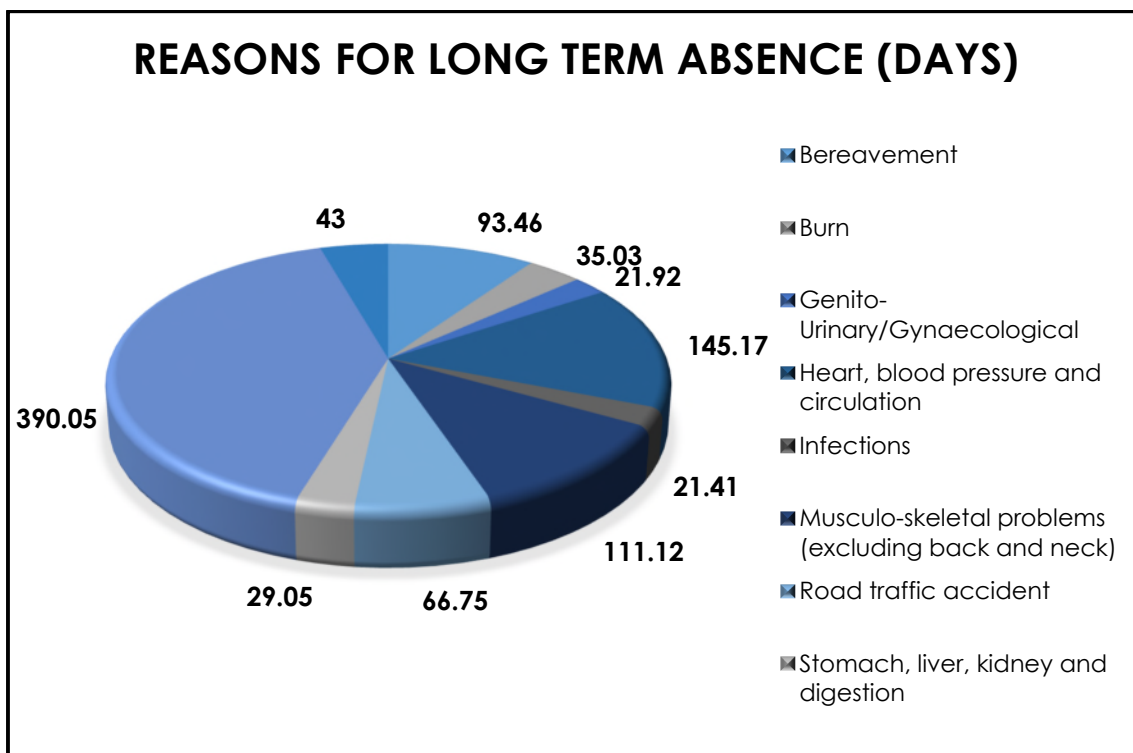
Short term absence cases accounted for 10% (27 cases) of overall absence, with the main reasons being stress & mental health, injury and colds & flu, as detailed in the below chart:



Long term absence

Long term absence cases (in excess of 20 days) accounted for 90% (29 cases) of overall absence. It should be noted that 5 long term absence cases have returned during this reporting period.

The reasons for long term absence largely remain the same and are detailed in the chart below:



Although the long term absence figure has increased since 2021/22, several mitigating factors should be noted and are explained below.

Key considerations for days lost to long term cases:

1. Disability - Approximately 22% of long term absence is recorded as disability related and in these instances management has a legal obligation to consider making reasonable adjustments. These cases can be complex and regularly require legal advice and guidance to progress to any potential dismissal.
2. 'No pay' periods - A number of long term absence cases 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 May 2022 would have been 2.06 days (on target).

Current situation

Currently, there are 23 long term absence cases and of these 8 cases are now planned for Formal Case Review.

Wellbeing focus

The Council remains focused on encouraging health and wellbeing in the workplace, and will continue to offer and implement the following initiatives:

- Promotion of an Employee Assistance Programme through Inspire offering 24/7 confidential support
- Health checks
- Breast Screening through Action Cancer
- Occupational Health Referrals and Physio Treatments
- Cycle to work scheme
- Flu vaccination programme
- Mental Health briefings and online courses for employees and managers
- Facilitating access to Council Leisure Facilities through the staff membership scheme
- Covid 19 advice, guidance, the HR Team providing a 24/7 HR Support line to help employees with Covid queries

Targeted actions

1. The Head of HR and HR Manager will hold bi-monthly meetings with relevant Deputy Chief Executives, Deputy Directors/Heads of Service to schedule formal case reviews where appropriate and to agree next steps for any further complex cases
2. Information to be provided to Heads of Service on an in-depth analysis of sickness absence patterns and trends
3. HR Officers to work directly with their service area managers on absence cases, agreeing action plans to address the cases effectively
4. Training for managers to be delivered on how to effectively manage their absence caseloads, how to have difficult conversations and absence management toolkits developed to help managers
5. Wellness meetings held in person or virtually if required with absent employees for regular contact
6. Identifying suitable return to work options e.g. alternative duties across the organisation
7. Timely referrals to Occupational Health and use of Physio provision where appropriate, including reviewing the effectiveness of these services
8. For employees who have triggered the absence threshold, Managers and HR will ensure absence review meetings are carried out in a timely manner
9. Ongoing promotion of the wellbeing resource tool, 'STAYWELL across the organisation in addition to the ongoing support services from Inspire and the courses available through Northern Trust Recovery College

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

4.6 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.

SECTION 75 AND RURAL SCREENINGS

The policies noted below have been screened between April and May 2022, with screening reports **enclosed**.

| POLICY | SCREENING DECISION |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dual language Street Sign Policy | 1 |
| Clotworthy Coffee Shop Refurbishment | 1 |
| Community Planning Capital Grants | 1 |

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

CONSULTATIONS AND SURVEYS

The consultations and surveys noted below cover January to date and status by way of update.

| CONSULTATION / SURVEY TITLE | STATUS CLOSED |
|--|----------------------|
| Age Friendly Programme | Closed 31 May 2022 |
| Balmoral Show 2022 - Business and Traders Survey | Closed 30 May 2022 |
| Garden Show Ireland 2022 | Closed 30 May 2022 |
| Corporate Recovery and Improvement Plan 2022-23 | Closed 30 May 2022 |
| Borough Life – Our Beautiful Borough | Closed 2 May 2022 |
| | STATUS OPEN |
| Balmoral Show 2022 | Closes 8 June 2022 |

Members are reminded that a separate consultation and survey update will be brought in due course to inform of feedback received.

RECOMMENDATION: that the quarterly screening report, consultations and surveys be noted.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Customer Services Officer

Agreed by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager, Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

4.7 CCS/CS/006 COMMUNICATIONS & CUSTOMERS CHANNEL REPORT

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

In May, Members were advised that a monthly update report would be presented to the Policy & Governance Committee to review the actions that would be used to measure progress towards this target.

| 1. | 2022-22 Performance Improvement Indicator | 2021-22 | Target 2022-23 |
|----|---|---------|----------------|
| | We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services. | 87.5% | 80% |

A digital services survey in the July issue of Borough Life will ask residents about their rating of overall Council services.

In 2021-22 residents were surveyed in four issues of Borough Life, and online via the Councils consultation hub, with 682 people providing a satisfaction rating of 87.5% with overall Council services.

| 2. | 2022-22 Performance Improvement Indicator | 2021-22 | Target 2022-23 | April | May | April & May |
|----|---|---------|----------------|-------|------|-------------|
| | The percentage of abandoned calls will be 6.5% (or less). | 6.1% | 6.5% | 5.5% | 4.5% | 5% |

A total of **16,203** calls were presented in May 2022, compared to **15,349** in April 2022.

The average percentage of abandoned calls improved from **5.5%** in April 2022 to **4.5%** in May 2022.

| 3. | Indicator | 2021-22 | Target 2022-23 | April | May | April & May |
|----|--|---------|----------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| | We have achieved at least 600,000 online transactions. | 652,593 | 600,000 | 67,844 | 60,947 | 128,792 |

Online transactions continue to be reviewed, with additional areas for self-service transactions being explored. The number of online transactions is based on the following:

- Caravan bookings (online)
- Theatre bookings (online)
- Leisure bookings (online)
- Dog licensing applications (online)
- Bulky waste bookings

| 4. | Indicator | 2021-22 | Target 2022-23 | April | May | April & May |
|----|--|-----------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| | There are at least 3,743 downloads of the Residents App. | 14,481 (total 29,938) | 3,743 | 980 | 1,365 | 2,345 |

During 2021-22, the App was updated to enable residents to book, and manage, their leisure activities, which prompted a strong growth in downloads. Additional functionality continues to be explored, and promotion of the benefit and use of the App is ongoing.

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 Councils website by 30 September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be 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

4.8 G/MSMO/2 CHANGES IN GROUP LEADER AND NOMINATING OFFICER BY THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY and ALLIANCE PARTY

The Chief Executive has been notified of changes in nominations by the Democratic Unionist Party and Alliance Party for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council as follows:

Democratic Unionist Party

- Following the Election of Phillip Brett as MLA, the Electoral Office has confirmed that Paula Bradley has been returned to fill the vacancy for the Glengormley Urban DEA from 1 June 2022.
- From the 26 May, Councillor Magill will be the Democratic Unionist Party Group Leader and Nominating Officer.

Alliance Party

- From the 2 June, Councillor Webb will be reinstated as the Alliance Party Group Leader and Nominating Officer.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

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

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

4.9 PT/CI/046 CORPORATE RECOVERY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-23 - CONSULTATION

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, in the context of strategic objectives and issues.

Section 85 of the Act requires a Council, for each financial year, to set itself improvement objectives for improving the exercise of its functions and to have in place arrangements to achieve those objectives. These objectives must be framed so that each improvement objective brings about improvement in at least one of the specified aspects of improvement as defined in Section 86: Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Fairness; Sustainability; Efficiency; Innovation.

In February 2022, Council approved the Corporate Recovery and Improvement Plan 2022-23, subject to consultation. On 7 March 2022 a twelve-week public consultation commenced, to derive feedback from Residents and Stakeholders; Local Businesses; Statutory and Community Planning partners; and other bodies with which collaborative working is taking place or is being planned.

An online questionnaire on the Council's corporate website / consultation hub enabled the Council to seek opinions on the key priorities identified within the draft Plan. The consultation was publicised on Council social media, alongside an article in the Borough Life magazine, with nearly 70,000 copies distributed within the Borough. In addition, Officers emailed a copy of the Plan to all their key stakeholders and Section 75 consultees for their comment and feedback.

The public consultation closed on 30 May 2022 and 36 responses were received (35 questionnaires completed and 1 independent response received). The responses provided reassurance of the appropriateness of the recovery commitments and principles identified and no changes to the plan are deemed necessary. A summary of the consultation results is **enclosed** for Members' information and a copy of the full consultation response is available upon request.

All respondents received an acknowledgement, and their comments were passed on to officers as appropriate. While no changes are deemed necessary to the plan itself, the comments and feedback received will be considered for incorporation into implementation plans derived out of the final Corporate Recovery and Improvement Plan 2022-23.

A final draft plan will be brought to the June Council meeting for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted

Prepared by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

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

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and
Governance

4.10 TT/CI/047 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT STATUTORY INDICATOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

Correspondence has been received **enclosed** from the Department of the Communities in relation to the Performance Improvement Statutory Indicator for the Department for the Economy.

The Department for the Economy had requested that the Department for Communities (DfC) amend the standards set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Orders (NI) 2015 to align with the programme targets in operation for the Go for it business start-up programme for 2021 to 2023.

A consultation on the amendment to 2015 Order was carried out by DfC from the period 21st December 2021 – 28 February 2022.

Following a Joint meeting with DfE and the NI Audit Office (NIAO) it has been agreed that councils reference both the statutory targets and the Go for It programme targets in both the performance improvement plan and annual performance improvement assessment report (which details performance for 2021-22).

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Denise Lynn, PA to the Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

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

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance

4.11 CCS/REG/022 CHILD FUNERAL FUND FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Correspondence has been received from the Department for Communities relating to the establishment of a Child Funeral Fund for Northern Ireland. The correspondence **enclosed** confirms that The Social Fund (Child Funeral Fund) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 have now been laid in the NI Assembly and these regulations were made on 25 March 2022 and will become operational on 1 June 2022.

Members are reminded that in May 2018 this Council agreed not to charge for the cost of burial or cremation for residents up to the age of 18 years and all costs related to those services are waived.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

4.12 CCS/CS/005 FRAMEWORK AND TIMEFRAME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE (MCHP) FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR

Members are advised that correspondence (**enclosed**) has been received from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman regarding the establishment of strategic and operational networks to commence work within the local government sector, as part of the development of a Model Complaints Handling Procedure to streamline processes.

The operational network has been established, with a Council officer nominated and has attended the first meeting of the group on 8 June 2022. The first aspect is a detailed scoping stage, conducted by NIPSO's Complaints Standards Team in collaboration with the operational network members. The purpose of the detailed scoping exercise is to assist the Complaints Standards team to learn and understand current complaints handling/management practices and processes used within the local government sector.

The Council approved an updated Complaints Procedure in 2021/22 to align our processes in advance of the anticipated development of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

Further details of the proposed framework and timeframe will be reported to the Policy & Governance Committee in due course.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be 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

4.13 G/MSMO/107 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD – CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Correspondence has been received from the Minister of Justice advising that the current terms of appointment of three members of the Northern Ireland Policing Board will expire in November 2022 and a further three in March 2023, and of her intention to launch a public appointment competition in the near future.

The correspondence requests that any views or queries regarding the process be emailed to Fiona.scullion@justice-ni.gov.uk and also requests responses by 24 June 2022.

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

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive