



MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT MOSSLEY MILL ON TUESDAY 2 MARCH 2021 AT 6.30 PM

In the Chair:	Alderman P Brett
Members Present:	Aldermen - F Agnew and P Michael Councillors – H Cushinan, S Flanagan, R Foster, P Hamill, L Irwin, N Kelly, A McAuley, N Ramsay, S Ross, M Stewart and R Wilson
Non Committee Members:	Councillors – A Bennington, R Lynch, V McWilliam and B Webb
Officers Present:	Director of Finance & Governance – S Cole Director of Organisation Development – A McCooke Borough Lawyer & Head of Legal Services – P Casey Head of Finance – J Balmer Head of Internal Audit – P Caulcutt Head of Corporate Recovery – L Johnston Media & Marketing Manager – N McCullough ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson Member Services Officer – S Boyd

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor McAuley to his first Policy and Governance Meeting and Members to the March Meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee, and, reminded all present of recording requirements.

In order to protect public health during the current COVID-19 emergency it was not possible to allow the public or the press to physically attend the meeting. The public and the press can access those parts of the meeting which they are entitled to attend via live stream (a link to which is on the Council website). The meeting minutes and audio recording would be published on the Council's website.

1. APOLOGIES

Alderman M Cosgrove

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 CCS/CPRM/033 COVID RECOVERY – MARKETING FOR RECOVERY

A presentation on Marketing for Recovery was provided the Director of Organisation Development and Media and Marketing Manager via Zoom.

The presentation provided an overview of Parks, Green Open Spaces, Leisure, Town COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan 2021/22 and Tourism

Following questions from Members the Director of Organisation Development agreed to liaise with the Director of Operations regarding dog fouling and ensure the appropriate signage for Toome Canal Walk.

ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director Organisation Development/Clifford Todd, Head of Environmental Health

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Organisation Development confirmed that the high street voucher scheme had been factored into the Recovery Plan.

Members commended all those involved in Waste Management for maintaining the Borough in challenging circumstances.

The Chairperson and Members thanked the Director of Organisation development and the Media and Marketing Manager for their presentation, and further thanked Members of the Strategic Economic Working Group for continuing to attract business to locate within the Borough.

4. ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 FI/AUD/3 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members were advised that the Department of Finance had issued an update of the HM Treasury's Orange Book – Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (through DAO (DoF) 04/20) which replaced the previous version issued (DAO 15/05) in October 2004. This Orange Book was tabled at the Audit Committee in June 2020.

Officers had undertaken a review of this guidance and had developed a Risk Management Strategy (circulated) which is aligned to the five principles of risk management within the Orange Book and sets out the Council's approach to the effective management of risk.

The Council is exposed to a variety of risks which are threats that an event or action will adversely affect our ability to achieve our objectives. As such

appropriate risk management processes are required to ensure risks are identified, assessed and treated.

These processes now involve a broader more practical look at risk management incorporating governance, leadership, integration, collaboration and continuous improvement. It also introduces the “three lines of defence” model which outlines clear roles and responsibilities for those involved in risk management.

Following approval of the Risk Management Strategy, Risk Management Procedures for the Council would be reviewed and updated to ensure that they are aligned with the Strategy and the five principles of Risk Management.

The Risk Management Strategy had been reviewed and approved by the Corporate Leadership Team in February 2020.

The Risk Management Strategy had been screened for the need for an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). Both an EQIA and a DPIA were not recommended.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the Risk Management Strategy be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit

4.2 G/IG/7 REVIEW OF SECURE DESK POLICY

The purpose of the Secure Desk Policy is:

- to set guidelines in order to reduce the risk of a security breach, data being lost, fraud and information theft
- to create a culture of staff responsibility in relation to the handling and care of personal data and other confidential information
- to ensure that the Council adheres to the obligations placed upon it by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018 as amended, replaced or extended from time to time and any other applicable legislation.

The policy is also designed to help reduce the amount of paper that is used by reducing unnecessary printing.

A review of the Council's policy was now required under a two-year review cycle.

The review had identified that no changes are required. The policy was circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Hamill
Seconded by Councillor Ramsay and agreed that

the reviewed Secure Desk Policy be approved.

ACTION BY: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

4.3 G-LEG-321-10 A6 TOOME BY-PASS: STOPPING-UP OF PRIVATE ACCESS

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) proposing to carry out a stopping-up of the roadway on the A6 Toome By-Pass under Article 68(1) of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. A copy of the correspondence and map were circulated for Members' information.

Council has no interest in the lands and officers had no issues with this proposal.

DfI Roads were requesting comments in relation to this proposal and had granted Council an extension after 2 March 2021 to make any comments on this matter.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

Council confirms that it has no interest in the lands and no objections to the proposal.

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

4.4 HR/GEN/035 NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY – CALL FOR EVIDENCE – PROTECTION FROM STALKING BILL

Members were advised that correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Northern Ireland Assembly in relation to the Protection from Stalking Bill.

The Committee for Justice welcomed any views/comments on the content of the Bill.

Written submission should be structured to address specific clauses of the Bill. If appropriate, it should include any amendments you wish to propose to the text of the Bill. Information regarding the Bill can be obtained from the Assembly's website <http://nia1.me/4fm> or can be provided on request by emailing the Committee at protectionfromstalkingbill@niassembly.gov.uk.

The closing date for written submissions was **16 April 2021**.

Members were advised that they may wish to note the correspondence or respond on a corporate, individual or party political basis.

Proposed by Councillor Hamill
Seconded by Councillor Irwin and agreed that

Members respond on an individual or party political basis.

ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

4.5 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 require 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 was 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 were circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

- i) the Treasury Management Policy be approved;**
- ii) the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 be approved; and**
- iii) the Annual Investment Strategy 2021/22 be approved.**

ACTION BY: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

5. ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

Members were advised that a meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group took place on Monday 1 February 2021 and a copy of the minutes was circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Hamill
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the Minutes of the Member Development Working Group Meeting held on Monday 1 February 2021 be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 HR/HR/019 AGENCY STAFF UPDATE

Members were 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.

The table circulated provided an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at January 2021 as compared to January 2020. It excluded limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (see Appendix 1 circulated).

Appendix 2, circulated, set out expenditure on agency workers in January 2021.

The cost of agency staff had decreased for the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 January 2021 at 3.9% of all staffing costs compared to 7% for the same period last year. Agency expenditure had significantly reduced following the release of agency workers in May 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 CCS/COR/005 CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – DIGITAL PLATFORMS - PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2020/21

Members were reminded that an update was provided in December which gave an overview on the use of digital platforms to communicate and engage with our residents and customers.

The report provided a further update on the progress made so far on the Council's current performance on digital communications, and included benchmarking performance against other Councils.

TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE

The table below illustrated our organic growth rates as we come to the end of the financial year.

Channel	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Website hits
Current audience	25,407	9,516	3,652	737	2.25M
Target 2020/21	25,000	10,000	5,000	500	>2.3M

Targets set for Facebook, LinkedIn and website had all been achieved. Twitter was progressing slowly and would be close to the target by end of year.

As the content on Instagram is pictorial, with no events, Council initiatives and restricted movement through lockdown, there had been a slower increase in followers. Moving into the summer months and with the lifting of some restrictions, the plan was to focus on increasing our followers on this platform particularly the younger age group (18-24 years old).

The target for hits to Council's website during 2020-21 was >2.3M. Since April we had registered 2.25M hits/visits from over 441k users, and it was anticipated that the target for the year will be exceeded. Throughout lockdown the website and social media had formed the core communications with our residents.

Comparison with other Councils

Comparative figures were only available for Facebook. These showed that Antrim and Newtownabbey was consistently in the top three Councils outside Belfast.

When compared against peers our key platform Facebook performed well, particularly on how our audience engages with our content and we had started to use this platform more to deliver much of Council's virtual content, eg Mayor's Charity Musical Concerts and One World of Culture Celebrations.

This was something we want to retain and we remain mindful that the quality of our content (judged by engagement) has a key bearing on the amount of our audience that sees it (reach).

Our Marketing for Recovery Plan would be finalised and reported to the Council in April. The Digital Roadmap would enable us to use our current platforms to further engage our residents, businesses and visitors. This would complement the use of our core publication, Borough Life, which will very soon recommence.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 G/MSMO/002 POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY (TERM OF COUNCIL)

Members were aware that memberships to external bodies, which are deemed to be positions of responsibility, are allocated in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 and are normally agreed at the Annual Meeting.

In relation to arc21:

1. The Alliance Party's nominating officer had advised they will no longer be taking up the arc21 position of responsibility (position 54 in the Positions of Responsibility table).

Position 55 is a position for the DUP and the nominating officer from the DUP had advised that Councillor Bennington will take up this position.

2. In addition, Councillor Goodman has advised that Councillor Kinnear will be the nomination for Sinn Féin, in place of Councillor McGrann.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Head of Corporate Recovery/Member Services

5.5 HR/ER/002 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Members were advised that the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) had concluded its consultation on the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.

The Council participated in the consultation and its feedback is reflected in the final Code (circulated).

A training programme would be delivered on the revised Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE

The purpose of the report was to update Members about the position relating to the management of attendance from April 2020 – January 2021 (summary circulated).

April 2020 – January 2021 - Attendance Update

Excluding COVID-19 sickness absences, attendance had improved during this current financial year. The average days' absence per employee was 6.68 against a target of 10.23 days, which represents 3.55 days within target.

The number of employees with 100% attendance was 84%, which marks an improvement when compared to the same period the previous year (64% of employees had full attendance). Our 100% attendance target this year was 60%

Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Strategy

The Council's Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Strategy continued to support its management of attendance.

Embedded within the Strategy is the clear understanding that health & wellbeing is about proactively avoiding illness, and optimising employees' physical and mental health. The Council had established a holistic approach, with a range of interventions across the organisation to include:

- Training for line managers on absence management
- Streamlining staff sickness reporting procedures
- Communication of occupational health service, employee assistance programmes and counselling
- Ongoing delivery of health events linked to the top three reasons for absence each year
- Monthly absence reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team
- Implementation of our Mental Health Toolkit
- Using our established network of Mental Health Champions
- 100% attendees get a letter of recognition for full attendance, from the Mayor
- Low cost staff leisure membership
- On-site access to cancer screening via the Action Cancer 'Big Bus' twice yearly.

HR Partners would continue to work with Heads of Service and Managers to monitor long term absence cases, to proactively accomplish employee health and wellbeing and improve the ongoing management of attendance.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.7 CCS/EDP/10 DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2020-2025

Members were advised that the Council is required to submit a Disability Action Plan (DAP) to the Equality Commission. The DAP is a statement of the Council's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity for disabled people and complements its Equality Scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The DAP is designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order through to 2016.

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life

These are collectively referred to as the "Disability duties".

Members were reminded that the Council approved a draft Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2020-2025 in November 2020, and this was subject to a 12 week consultation period. The consultation was promoted through the Council's digital channels and it was also issued to a consultee list of over 300 stakeholders. A total of 4 responses were received; 3 organisations and 1 individual. Appendix 1 circulated summarised the feedback received and proposed responses.

The DAP had been updated to reflect the feedback and the final version highlighted amends in Appendix 2 circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the consultation feedback be noted and that the final Disability Action Plan be approved.

ACTION BY: Ellen Boyd, Customer Accessibility and Equality Officer

5.8 G/MSMO/2 CHANGES IN NOMINATION, MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND EXTERNAL BODIES BY THE ALLIANCE PARTY

Following the resignation of Councillor Vicki McAuley, the Electoral Office had confirmed that Andrew McAuley had been returned to the Airport vacancy for the Alliance Party, effective from 24 February 2021.

Following this confirmation, the Nominating Officer advised of the following changes in Memberships to Committees, External Bodies and Working Groups with immediate effect:

Standing Committees	
Policy & Governance Committee	Councillor Andrew McAuley
External Bodies and Working Groups	
Peace IV	Councillor Andrew McAuley
Children and Young People Working Group	Councillor Andrew McAuley
Building Positive Relations working Group	Councillor Andrew McAuley
Belfast Hills Partnership	Councillor Andrew McAuley
Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues	Councillor Andrew McAuley
DEA Member Engagement Group (Airport)	Councillor Andrew McAuley
Crumlin Town Team	Councillor Andrew McAuley

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
 Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Member Services/Ronan McKenna, Community Planning Manager

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan
 Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease.

Members were advised that the livestream and audio recording would cease at this point.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE CCS/CEA/013 CEMETERY BURIAL CAPACITY UPDATE

Members were reminded that in January 2018 the Council agreed that the policy relating to the pre-sale of new burial rights be amended so that, with immediate effect, these will only be sold for immediate burial and that pre-selling will end, except in cases where terminal illness has been confirmed.

The burial capacity within Council cemeteries was noted in the table below (as at 31/01/2021).

Cemetery	No. of plots remaining	Average no. of plots sold (based on 3yr average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity
Carnmoney	0	156	0

Ballyclare	865	30	28.8
Rashee	472	9	52.4
Sixmile	2323	53	43.8
Crumlin	474	10	47.4
TOTAL	4156	258	16.11

Garden of Remembrance Plots	<i>(for burial of ashes only)</i>		
Carnmoney	The review due to land conditions is almost complete. An update will be provided in due course.		
Ballyclare	130	5	26
Mallusk	15	1	15
TOTAL	376	38	9.89

The estimated burial capacity for the entire Borough was currently just over **16 years**.

Following questions from Members the Director of Organisation Development provided clarity on cemetery capacity and the estimated remaining burial capacity within Council Cemeteries.

A further report will be made to Committee relating to the potential to explore the availability of land for future burials.

Proposed by Councillor Ross
 Seconded by Councillor Ramsay and agreed that

the report be noted.

*ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development/
 Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations*

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Hamill
 Seconded by Alderman Brett and agreed that

the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.33 pm.

MAYOR