



3 June 2021

Committee Chair: Alderman P Michael

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor T McGrann

Committee Members: Councillors – M Cooper, H Cushinan, G Finlay, R Foster, S Flanagan, P Hamill, N Kelly, A McAuley, M Magill, N Ramsay, V Robinson, M Stewart and R Wilson

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A remote meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee will be held in The **Chamber, Mossley Mill on Tuesday 8 June 2021 at 6.30pm.**

All Members are requested to attend the meeting via "Zoom".

To ensure social distancing Chairperson of the Committee may attend the Council Chamber.

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

PLEASE NOTE: refreshments will not be available.

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 Review of Policy Framework
- 3.2 Corporate Planning Workshop 2021
- 3.3 Reclassification of A8 at Ballynure Village to A58
- 3.4 NILGA Council Policy Consultation – Vision and Development of Local Government (Phase One) 2021-2023
- 3.5 Procurement Tender Reports and Award of Contracts
- 3.6 Equality Commission Annual Progress Report 2020/21

4 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 4.1 Payments Performance
- 4.2 Department for Infrastructure - The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 – Developments at Antrim Road, Newtownabbey; Douglas Hill, Burnside; Fairview Farm, Ballyclare; Doagh Road, Newtownabbey; Linen Green, Antrim and Castle Road, Randalstown
- 4.3 Members Attendance at Meetings
- 4.4 Elected Member Development Working Group Minutes
- 4.5 Agency Staff Update
- 4.6 Year End Report On FOI/EIR/DPA Requests
- 4.7 Local Government Staff Commission
- 4.8 Finance and Payroll Software Implementation Project
- 4.9 Northern Ireland Partnership Panel Local Government Meeting

5 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

5.1 Letting of lands for Grazing/Cutting 2021 Season

5.2 Cemetery Burial Capacity Update

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2021**

3. ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 G/IG/7 REVIEW OF POLICY FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the Policy Framework is to provide policy authors with guidance and templates to review policies regularly in line with assigned deadlines. Each Head of Service is responsible for developing and reviewing relevant policies under their departmental remit.

The Policy Framework has been reviewed and the following changes made:

- amendments to the Policy Making Cycle to reflect the use of NetConsent (a Policy management system) and iConnect (a portal for employees to access internal and external resources),
- statements to be included in each policy relating to Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Data Protection Impact Assessment, and
- the requirement to report policy reviews to the Committee which approved the original policy whether or not amendments are required.

A copy of the reviewed Policy Framework is **enclosed**.

RECOMMENDATION: that the reviewed Policy Framework be approved.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Corporate Recovery

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance & Governance (Interim)

3.2 PT/CI/035 CORPORATE PLANNING WORKSHOP 2021

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

It is proposed that the Corporate Planning Workshop is held between 9.15am and 4pm on Friday 12 November 2021, in the Council Chamber, Mossley Mill, and via Zoom.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Corporate Planning Workshop is held on Friday 12 November 2021.

Prepared by: Helen Hall, Head of Performance and Transformation

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

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

3.3 G-LEG-321/14 RECLASSIFICATION OF A8 AT BALLYNURE VILLAGE TO A58

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from a consultant for the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) regarding the proposed reclassification of the Belfast Road and Larne Road in Ballynure from the A8 to the B58.

The proposed reclassification will enable a diversion route to be created for the newly constructed A8 dual carriageway. A copy of the correspondence and map are **enclosed** for Members' information.

Officers have no issues with the proposal and felt that the change in status would potentially make it easier to obtain direct access onto this stretch of road.

DfI Roads are therefore requesting comments in relation to the proposal.

Members instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

Approved by: Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer & Head of Legal Services

3.4 FI/FIN/049 NILGA COUNCIL POLICY CONSULTATION – VISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PHASE ONE) 2021-2023

Members are advised that correspondence **enclosed** has been received from NILGA in relation to the Vision and Development of Local Government to prioritise activity up to the Stormont and Council Elections scheduled in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

The framework **enclosed** flows from existing work already contributed to by Council Members and Officers working alongside NILGA as response to the COVID19 pandemic and other strategic changes affecting Councils and citizens.

Council Officers have reviewed the vision statement, main themes and actions within the consultation document and are content that these will lead to better democracy and improved public services across Northern Ireland.

The document also aligns with the Councils two year recovery plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Members agree with the vision, themes and actions within the NILGA 11 Council Policy Consultation.

Prepared & Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance (Interim)

3.5 FI/PRO/GEN/044 PROCUREMENT TENDER REPORTS AND AWARD OF CONTRACTS

Currently, tender reports are brought to the relevant Committee for approval prior to any contract award. Award is then ratified at the subsequent Full Council meeting. This process can add up to four weeks to the delivery timeframe for service or project delivery.

The Governance process of Council in the form of the Constitution of Council and Scheme of Delegation contained within, does however allow for the;

'Authorising of a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works following economic appraisal/business case is in line with Council approval'

This delegated authority is given to the Corporate Leadership Team providing that it ensures that any award is in line with Council Governance and Council's Financial Regulations.

It is proposed that this delegated power is now utilised and that all contract awards are reported retrospectively each month providing they are in line with the Scheme of Delegation.

This will allow service or project delivery to be expedited more efficiently and facilitate timely delivery actions against the Councils Recovery plan.

Note that if the tender process is not in line with the economic appraisal/business case for a project then a Council report will be prepared to request relevant permissions.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council Scheme of Delegation be used for the award of contracts and Members updated retrospectively.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance (Interim)

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

3.6 CCS/EDP/7 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2020/21, EQUALITY COMMISSION

Members are reminded that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to have due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, men and women generally, persons with a disability and persons without and persons with dependants and persons without.

The Council's Equality Scheme describes certain arrangements that as a public authority, the Council has set-up and is obliged to apply and follow as a means of fulfilling the duties imposed on it by Section 75(1) and (2) (i.e. the duties to have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations).

This includes arrangements for training staff, assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity, and monitoring any adverse impact of those policies that have been adopted.

The Council must provide an Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission and outline how those arrangements have been applied and to assess how effective they have been in supporting the Council to comply with the Section 75 duties.

The progress report for March 2020 to April 2021 is **enclosed**, with Appendix 1 for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be approved.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Customer Services Officer

Approved by: Nicola McCullough, Media and Marketing Manager

4. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

Members are reminded the Department for Communities (DfC) issued revised guidance (Local Government Circular 19/2016) on prompt payments and the recording of invoice payments in November 2016. This guidance requested councils to record specific performance targets of 10 working days and 30 calendar days and continue a cycle of quarterly reporting on prompt payment performance by councils to the DfC and its publication on their website.

The Council's prompt payment performance for the period **1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021** is set out below:

The default target for paying invoices, where no other terms are agreed, is 30 days.

(N.B. 30 days target is 30 calendar days and 10 days is 10 working days).

During the above period, the Council paid 4,611 invoices totalling £16,012,205.

The Council paid 4,007 invoices within the 30 day target. (87%)

The Council paid 3,284 invoices within the 10 day target. (71%)

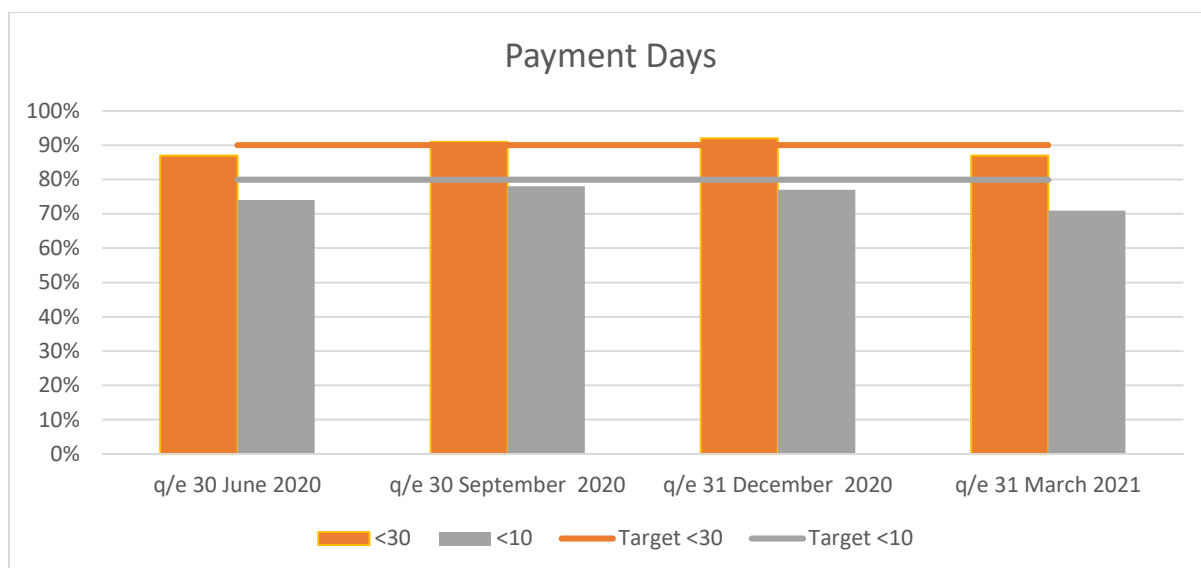
The Council paid 604 invoices outside of the 30 day target. (13%)

The Council has set a target of paying 90% of invoices within 30 days and 80% within 10 days.

The quarterly results from June 2020 to date are as follows:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 30 June 2020	4,032	87%	74%
q/e 30 September 2020	3,799	91%	78%
q/e 31 December 2020	4,659	92%	77%
q/e 31 March 2021	4,611	87%	71%
Total for 20/21	17,101	89%	75%
Total for 19/20	26,624	86%	69%

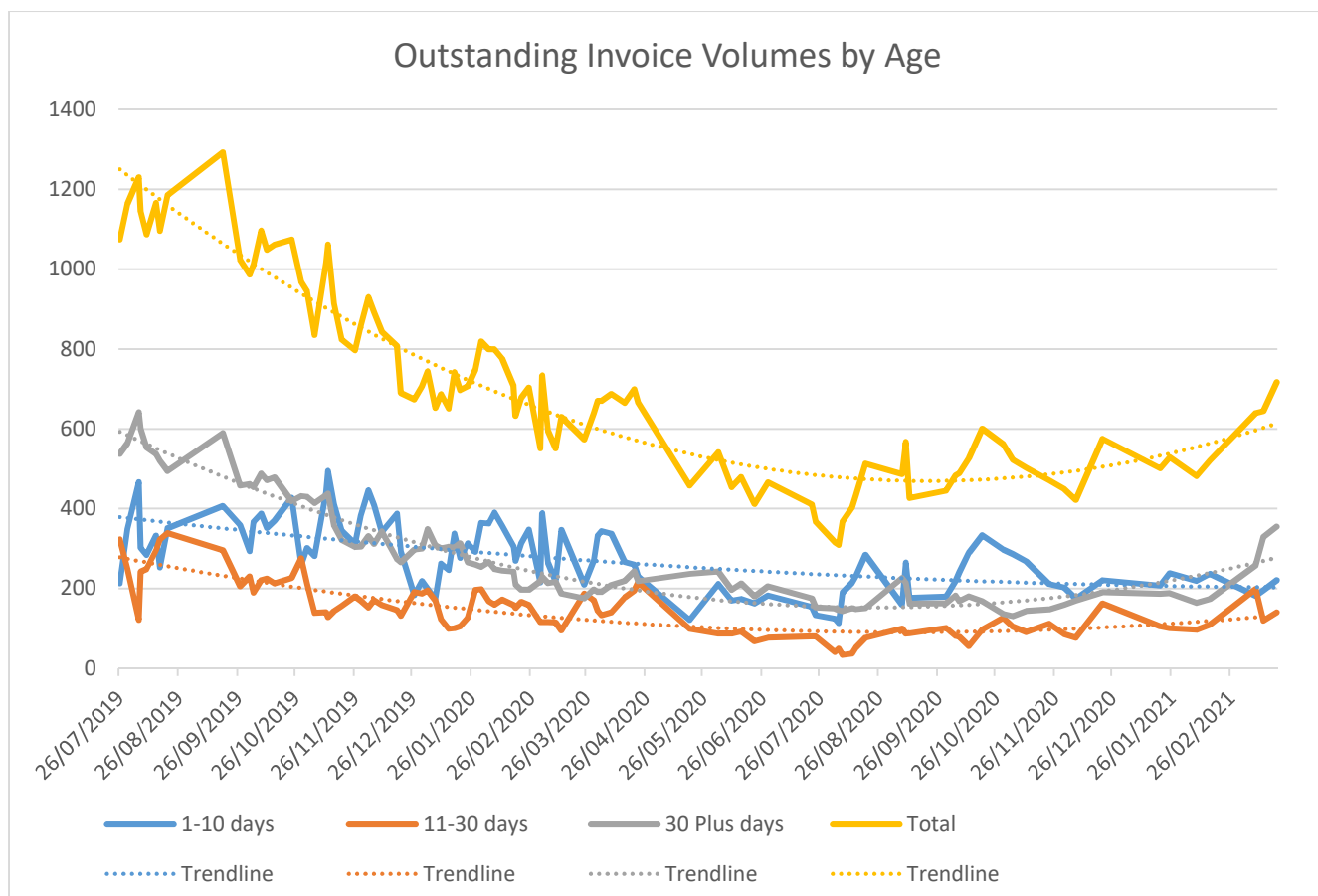
The performance presented graphically highlights the performance metrics for the above.



During both the second and third quarters of 2020/21 the target of paying 90% of invoices within 30 days was met, with performance for the 10 day target remaining similar to quarter 2. Performance for quarter 4 was down for both the 30 day and 10 day targets. This was mainly due to staff absences within the accounts processing section and staff in the finance section involved in the implementation of the new finance system, Ci Anywhere, going live in April 2021.

The volume of invoices paid (4,611 invoices) for Quarter 4 for 2020/21 compared to the same quarter for 2019/20 (6,308 invoices paid) was down by approx. 27%, with some facilities closed or services reduced due to COVID-19.

Central to the performance improvement over the year has been the monitoring regime implemented by the Corporate Leadership Team. Another outturn of this is that the overall level of outstanding invoices has decreased markedly from over 1200 in August 2019 to now around 700.



Both indicators for the year show improvement on 19/20 with the paid within 30 days metric being above the average for all councils. A new corporate finance system was implemented in April 2021 – it is expected that prompt payment performance will be adversely impacted as this system is embedded. However it is expected that in the medium term, performance levels will continue to improve from 20/21 levels as the enhanced functionality and flexibility of the new system is realised.

The prompt payment performance for Councils in Northern Ireland is published quarterly by the Department for Communities (DfC). The prompt payment performance for the quarter ended 31 December 2020 is shown in **Appendix 1 (enclosed)**; the Council's performance for Quarter 3 against the average performance for the other Councils for the same Quarter of 2020/21 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (3rd Quarter 2020/21)	92%	77%
All Councils (3rd Quarter 2020/21)	91%	66%

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance (Interim)

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

4.2 G-LEG-325/11, 325/12, 325/13, 325/14, 325/15 & 325/16 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE - THE PRIVATE STREETS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1980 – DEVELOPMENTS AT ANTRIM ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY; DOUGLAS HILL, BURNSIDE; FAIRVIEW FARM, BALLYCLARE; DOAGH ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY; LINEN GREEN, ANTRIM AND CASTLE ROAD, RANDALSTOWN

Correspondence has been received from the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) advising that streets at the above developments have now been adopted by Dfi Roads (copy correspondence **enclosed**).

RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.

Prepared by: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

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

4.3 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 2020 to May 2021 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 2020 to May 2021 be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Corporate Recovery

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

4.4 G/MSMO/27 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Members are advised that a meeting of the Member Development Working Group took place on Tuesday 4 May 2021 and a copy of the minutes are **enclosed** for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Minutes of the Member Development Working Group Meeting held on Tuesday 4 May 2021 be noted.

Prepared by: Sarah Fenton, Human Resources Assistant

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources (Interim)

4.5 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.

The table appended provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at April 2021 as compared to April 2020. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (**enclosed**).

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Agreed by: Pauline Greer, Lead Human Resources Manager

Approved by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources (Interim)

4.6 G/DPFI/2 YEAR END REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

A report has been prepared on requests received from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this is enclosed.

The process for dealing with FOI/EIR/DPA requests continued to operate in much the same way as the previous year although there were some added complexities due to COVID-19. It was agreed by the Strategic Response Team on 20 March 2020 that the processing of FOI/EIR/DPA requests should be suspended as a non-essential service to permit resources to focus on the essential services. This decision was sustained by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who recognised that resources might be diverted away from usual compliance or information governance work due to COVID-19. Following the relaxation of COVID restrictions the process was reactivated once again on 1 June 2020.

A summary of the statistics for the year is:

- There was a 32.5% decrease in the number of requests received compared with the previous year. This was probably due to COVID-19.
- The percentage of requests answered within the deadline (20 days for FOI and EIR requests and a calendar month for requests under DPA) has improved from 98% to 100%. This is despite difficulty in obtaining information for FOI responses due to staff working from home or being furloughed.
- Of the 247 requests received, 162 were under FOI, 74 under EIR and 11 under DPA.
- The sections that received most requests were Governance (57), Environmental Health (56), Planning (51) and Finance (44).
- One appeal was received during the year but the Council did not hold the information requested.
- One complaint to the ICO was notified during the year regarding an EIR. The Council provided a full response to the ICO. The Commissioner's decision was that the Council had correctly applied regulation 12(4)(b) under EIR – manifestly unreasonable request and required no steps to be taken.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report is noted.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Corporate Recovery

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

4.7 HR/ER/002/VOL2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION

Members are advised that correspondence has been received **enclosed** in relation to the dissolving of the Local Government Staff Commission.

In July 2012, the Department of the Environment initiated a review of the Commission. Following consultation, the Minister of the Environment concluded that, although the commission had performed well in a necessary challenging role for 40 years, other developments meant that a statutory body of that type was no longer required. As a consequence, in 2014 the Executive agreed that the Commission should be dissolved on 31st March 2017.

Given the time that has passed since the review, the Minister has decided to carry out a follow-up consultation in order to ascertain if there are any reasons that the Executive decision to dissolve the Commission should be reconsidered.

Legislation will only be taken forward when a decision is made on when/whether the Commission is to be dissolved.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared & Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance (Interim)

4.8 FI/FIN/044 FINANCE AND PAYROLL SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT UPDATE

Members will recall that approval was given for the implementation of the new Finance and Payroll finance system at February 2020 Policy & Governance meeting.

It was agreed that Members would be kept updated on the progress and a project update report is now **enclosed** for Members information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance (Interim)

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

4.9 CE/OA/012 NORTHERN IRELAND PARTNERSHIP PANEL LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEETING

Members are advised that correspondence has been received in relation to the Northern Ireland Partnership Panel Local Government Meeting. The next meeting is due to be held on Wednesday 20th October 2021.

A copy of the draft Partnership Panel minutes held on 21st April 2021 is **enclosed** for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared & Approved by: Sandra Cole, Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance (Interim)