



2 January 2020

Committee Chair: Councillor P Dunlop

Committee Vice-Chair: Alderman D Kinahan

Committee Members: Alderman – F Agnew  
Councillors – H Cushinan, S Flanagan, N Kelly, M Goodman,  
P Hamill, V McAuley, N McClelland, M Magill, P Michael,  
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 **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Tuesday 7 January 2020 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](mailto:memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## **A G E N D A**

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### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **3 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1 Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- 3.2 National Association of Councils UK Conference
- 3.3 Application for Renewal of Premises for Civil Marriage/Civil Partnership Ceremonies

### **4 ITEMS FOR NOTING**

- 4.1 Member Development Working Group Minutes
- 4.2 Summary Rates Position 2020/21
- 4.3 Agency Update
- 4.4 Staff Turnover Report
- 4.5 Registration Services Update

### **5 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE**

- 5.1 Cemetery Burial Capacity Update

### **6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

# REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON TUESDAY 7 JANUARY 2020

## 3. ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 3.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011

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, 15 February 2020.

#### **(a) FI/FA/6 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2020/21**

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 2020/21 is **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the MRP Policy 2020/21 be approved.**

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Management Accountant

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

#### **(b) FI/FA/7 Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23**

The Prudential Code requires the council to develop three-year revenue forecasts and three-year capital expenditure plans. These are shown in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23, a copy of which is **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23 be noted.**

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Management Accountant

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

#### **(c) 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 requires 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 is 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 are **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that**

- i) the Treasury Management Policy be approved**
- ii) the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 be approved**
- iii) the Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21 be approved**

Prepared by: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

**(d) FI/FA/9 Report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves**

Section 4 and 6 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council to have regard to a report, a copy of which is **enclosed**, from the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves when considering the estimates for the next financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Report by the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of the Reserves be noted.**

Prepared by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

**(e) FI/FA/5 Capital Strategy**

The Prudential Code requires the Council to develop a Capital Strategy which provides a high-level overview of the long-term context of capital expenditure and investment decisions and their associated risks and rewards along with an overview of how risk is managed for future financial sustainability.

A copy of the Capital strategy is **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Capital Strategy 2020/21 be approved.**

Prepared by: Ann Hamilton, Financial Controller

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

### **3.2 G/MSMO/21 THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS UK**

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from the National Association of Councillors UK advising that the Environment/Climate Change Conference will take place from 24-26 January 2020 at the Ripon Spa Best Western Hotel, Ripon (North Yorkshire). The delegate fee for the Conference is £350 plus VAT and accommodation is available at the conference hotel at £60 plus VAT per night.

Members are advised that this conference is not usually attended.

**Members' instructions are requested.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

### **3.3 CCS/REG/9 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGE / CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES**

Under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and the Civil Partnership Act (2004), the Council has the responsibility to approve appropriate applications for Place Approvals for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships. Approvals last for 3 years and a renewal application has been received from the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick for re-approval of the following areas within the premises:

#### **Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick**

(a) **Castle Upton Suite**

(b) **Lylehill Suite**

(c) **Donegore Suite**

Part of the process requires that a Notice of Interest be displayed for a three-week period in a prominent place at the complex to allow for public objection.

No objections have been received to the notification to apply for Place Approval and the premises have been formally inspected and no problems have been found with regard to the application.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the named premise is re-approved to hold Civil Marriages under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and Civil Partnerships under the Civil Partnership Act (2004)**

Prepared by: Emma Thompson, Registrar

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

#### **4. ITEMS FOR NOTING**

##### **4.1 G/MSMO/27 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Members are advised that a meeting of the Member Development Working Group took place on Monday 2 December 2019. A copy of the minutes is enclosed for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the minutes of the Member Development Working Group meeting held on Monday 2 December 2019 be noted.**

Prepared by: Fiona Gunning, Organisation Development Officer

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development



#### 4.2 FI/FIN/11 SUMMARY RATES POSITION 2020/21

An updated draft rates calculation is enclosed for 2020/21.

The net cost of services remains unchanged from December at £51.9 million. Land and Property Services have provided updated EPP figures, to calculate the Non-Domestic Rate, and an updated conversion factor to calculate the Domestic Rate. The effect of these is that the increase in the Domestic Rate is now 2.01%, down from 2.1%.

Finance officers are continuing to liaise with Land and Property Services and Council budget holders to ensure that the EPP figures and the net cost of services are as accurate as possible.

Any updated calculations shall be presented to Council in accordance with the agreed Estimates Timetable.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the revised draft rates position for 2020/21 be noted.**

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Management Accountant

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

### 4.3 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 November 2019 as compared to November 2018. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (see Appendix 1 **enclosed**).

Appendix 2 **enclosed** sets out expenditure on agency workers in November 2019.

The cost of agency staff has increased for the period of 1 April 2019 to 30 November 2019 at 7% of all staffing costs compared to 6.51% for the same period last year. This increase substantively relates to the pay increase and increase in Employers pension contributions effective from April 2019, and the earlier starting date required for parks seasonal staff this year.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, Human Resources Administrator

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Human Resources Manager

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

#### 4.4 HR/HR/003 STAFF TURNOVER REPORT

The staff turnover rate is a measurement used to determine the proportion of employees who leave the Council, and it is an operational performance indicator within the Human Resources Business Plan. As a performance indicator, it helps to establish whether the level of turnover is at an acceptable rate.

In practical terms, the turnover rate is assessed based on the number of employees leaving the Council as a percentage of the total number of staff employed by the Council.

At its broadest, the turnover rate can encompass all leavers, both voluntary (e.g. resignations, retirees, voluntary severance) and involuntary (e.g. temporary, seasonal, fixed term contracts and dismissals).

The Council's staff turnover rate includes voluntary leavers, which have declined over the past 3 financial years, as noted in the following table:

<b>Year</b>	<b>ANBC Staff Turnover Rate</b>	<b>Local Government Association Ave Turnover rate for Local Government (UK)</b>
2016/17	5.86%	13.4%
2017/18	5.37%	13.8%
2018/19	4.75%	Not yet available

For comparative purposes the average staff turnover rate across Local Government UK has been included in the table above (staff turnover data for Local Government NI is not officially reported, and therefore the information is not available for comparative purposes.)

Staff turnover rates vary between sectors and some of the highest levels are typically found in retailing, hotels, catering, call centres and other lower paid private sector service groups. Turnover rates vary from region to region with the highest rates being found where unemployment is lowest and where it is unproblematic for workers to secure desirable alternative employment.

Within this Council the staff turnover rate has remained consistently low, which can be linked to a number of factors that contribute to attracting and retaining staff including:

- Financial/contractual reasons (competitive levels of salary, attractive employer pension scheme, childcare voucher schemes, annual leave etc)
- Non-financial incentives (opportunities for promotion, equality of opportunity, flexible working practices, opportunities for learning and development, continuous professional development, health and wellbeing initiatives, best practice policies and procedures)
- Carrying out exit interviews to understand why employees are leaving and taking action on the results where necessary

Whilst the staff turnover is low, the Head of Human Resources will continue to assess staff turnover rates and report on the development of any relevant factors that are necessary to address any arising issues related to the attraction and retention of staff.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by Joan Cowan, Head of Human Resources

Approved by Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

#### **4.5 CCS/REG/023 REGISTRATION SERVICES UPDATE**

The General Register Office is part of the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), which is an agency of the Department of Finance ("the Department") and is responsible for the administration and control of civil registration of births, adoptions, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships.

The Registration function is regulated and governed by the relevant legislation which provides that each local government district shall be a registration district.

In the exercise of the functions conferred on it as a local registration authority, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council acts as an agent for the Department and delivers a Registration service for residents and customers.

**Registration services are available at both civic buildings and often customers visit the offices when they require the service.**

In view of the nature of the services offered, customer demand can be difficult to predict and there may be periods of high demand, which can create a waiting time for customers.

To improve the customer service, it is proposed to implement an appointment system for the Registration services at both Civic buildings, effective from 1 February 2020. Customers will still have the option of accessing the service without an appointment, however appointments will be given first priority.

The feedback has been positive from other Councils that successfully operate the appointment system as it has reduced waiting times and improved the customer experience.

**RECOMMENDATION: that an appointment system, for the Registration Services be implemented effective from 1 February 2020.**

Prepared by: Emma Thompson, Registrar

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development