



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON TUESDAY 8 APRIL 2025 AT 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Councillor A O'Lone
Members Present (In person)	:	Aldermen – L Clarke and J Smyth Councillors – A Bennington, J Burbank, M Cooper, H Cushinan, H Magill, E McLaughlin and V McWilliam
Members Present (Remote)	:	Alderman - P Bradley Councillors - A McAuley and L O'Hagan
Non-Committee Members: (Remote)	:	Councillor Ní Chonghaile
Officers Present (In person)	:	Director of Organisation Development (Interim) – H Hall Deputy Director of Finance – J Balmer Deputy Director of Governance – L Johnston Head of Finance – R Murray Organisation Development & Employee Engagement Manager – K Young ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson Member Services Manager – A Duffy

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the April Meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee and reminded all present of recording requirements.

1 APOLOGIES

Alderman L Boyle
Councillor S Cosgrove

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 OD/OD/004 ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

1. Purpose

The Chairperson welcomed Katherine Young, Organisation Development & Employee Engagement Manager who provided Members with an update on the Employee Engagement Framework, and the recent initiatives and outcomes.

The Chairperson and Members congratulated the Organisational Development team on their win at the CIPD Awards and to all staff involved in organising the Golden Threads Awards.

They thanked Katherine for her presentation, and she left the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Magill
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

NO ACTION

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 PT/CI/068 BUSINESS PLANS 2025/2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members to approve the Organisation Development and Finance and Governance Business Plans 2025/2026.

2. Background

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

Specifically, the duties in the Act relate to Sections 84(1), 85(2) and 85(9) whereby the Council would have 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 were met.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In January 2025, 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 played a vital role in the Council's performance management and delivery processes. It would offer a more efficient and cohesive approach to monitoring and evaluating performance, while improving overall visibility.

The purpose of the Directorate Business Plans was to:

- Demonstrate how each of the Directorates were supporting and achieving Council's priorities.
- Provide a clear sense of purpose of the Directorate and the challenges it would face.
- Illustrate how it would align its resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Measure performance and to be held accountable to ensure we deliver for Council and its residents.

Business Plans for Organisation Development and Finance and Governance were circulated for approval.

5. Financial Position/Implications

As agreed, as part of Council's rate setting process.

6. Governance

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

In response to a Member's queries the Director of Organisation Development (Interim) advised that structures would be reviewed and considered in consultation with Members and Trade Unions throughout the year. In relation to a question about managing attendance the Director confirmed that the 2024-2025 quarter 4 managing attendance performance would be reported to the May Committee and include financial implications.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank

Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

Members considered and approved the:

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

ACTION BY: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction/Background

Council would regularly review the Financial Regulations to ensure a high level of governance was 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 provided the necessary control on financial matters, whilst encouraging best practice and promoting local accountability.

The Financial Regulations provided a framework, through which the Chief Executive could be satisfied that proper financial administration was in place. The aim of these Regulations was to help ensure that high standards of propriety and best value were achieved. All Elected Members and employees would 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 would 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 Regulations had therefore been drafted and were summarised below:

Section	Amendment
Section 7	The maximum procurement threshold for public procurements is raised from £30,000 to £50,000.
Section 16	16.1 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 was circulated for approval.

3.2 Council Constitution Amendments

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

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

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

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

the updated Financial Regulations and an update to the Council's Constitution be approved.

ACTION BY: Richard Murray, Head of Finance & Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal

4.3 **CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was 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

In accordance with the Dual Language Street Sign Policy, adopted by Council on 30 May 2022 (circulated), the following update outlined the status of applications received.

3. Application Update

STAGE 1: PETITION VERIFICATION

Two applications had been received at Stage 1.

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

The occupiers signing both the petitions had 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 were no current applications at Stage 2.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION

One application had been progressed to Stage 3.

1. LONGLANDS AVENUE, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7FD

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

A map and outline costings was circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank

Seconded by Councillor Cushinan and agreed 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. |

ACTION BY: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction/Background

Council was 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 had been received circulated, from the Department for Communities (DfC) following a recent review of Councillors roles and responsibilities. This had 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 had been updated circulated to show the new maximum rates applied from the valid dates.

As of 1 April 2025, the Basic Responsibility Allowance would be £18,329 (this included 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 would be reported to Members for their approval.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and agreed that

the updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for 2025-26 be approved.

ACTION BY: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

The Chairperson advised that the supplementary report would be taken at this point.

4.5 G/MSMO/031 PROPOSED CHANGE OF VENUE AND TIME FOR THE MAY 2025 POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to change the venue and time of the May 2025 Policy and Governance Committee to facilitate attendance of Members who wish to do so, at one of the Council's VE Day 80 events.

2. Background

The 80th Anniversary of VE Day is on 8 May 2025 and the Council was delivering a programme of activity and events to mark this significant anniversary. One of the events, a Beating Retreat by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment, was planned for 7pm on Wednesday 7 May in the Civic Square at Mossley Mill.

Given the Bank Holiday Monday on 5th May the May meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee was taking place also on Wednesday 7 May at 6.30pm in its usual venue of Antrim Civic Centre.

In order to facilitate attendance at the Beating Retreat, of any Committee Members who wish to attend, Members were asked to consider a location and time change of the May Committee.

3. Previous Decision of the Council

Members were advised that the schedule of meetings for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 was approved at the October 2024 meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee.

Members were also advised that the Council's proposed programme to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day in May 2025 was approved by the Community Development Committee in February 2025 including the Beating Retreat scheduled for Wednesday 7 May 2025.

4. Key Issues

In developing a suitable programme to mark VE Day 80 officers reached out to the Head of Army Engagement in Northern Ireland with a view to collaborating on an appropriate event. As a result, the Council was given the opportunity to host a Beating Retreat by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment at 7pm in the Civic Square at Mossley Mill on Wednesday 7 May 2025. The band had multiple engagements over the VE Day 80 period and the clash with the May Committee was unavoidable.

It was proposed that Members consider on this occasion, the relocation of the Committee to Mossley Mill as well as an earlier start time of 6pm.

5. Finance

There were no budget implications associated with this issue.

6. Governance

The Council's annual schedule of meetings was approved each year by the Policy and Governance Committee. This Committee was usually held in Antrim Civic Centre and Committee meetings usually commence at 6.30pm, with the exception of the Planning Committee which starts at 6pm.

7. Summary

There was an unavoidable diary clash with one of the Council's VE Day 80 events, a Beating Retreat by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment planned for 7pm at Mossley Mill on Wednesday 7 May 2025.

Members may wish to consider changing the usual location of the May 2025 Policy and Governance Committee from Antrim Civic Centre to Mossley Mill and bringing the meeting start time forward from 6.30pm to 6pm so that Committee Members if they wish to can attend the VE Day 80 event.

Moved by Councillor Cooper

Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that

the Policy and Governance Committee meeting scheduled for 6.30pm on 7 May 2025 be relocated from Antrim Civic Centre to Mossley Mill starting at 6pm to allow Members to attend the VE Day 80 celebrations.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was 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 were 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 had 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

The retrospective Section 75 and Rural Screening for the review of the Household Recycling Centre Opening Hours were circulated.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Burbank and agreed that

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

NO ACTION

5.2 OD/OD/002 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was 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 were circulated for information.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

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

NO ACTION

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Members were advised that Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) would be taken at this point.

There were no AORB raised.

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Burbank
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

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

7 ITEM IN CONFIDENCE

7.1 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/476, CD/PM/178, FI/PRO/TEN/519 PROCUREMENT APPROVALS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members the appointment of suitable service providers for works listed below.

2. Background

The following tender evaluation reports were circulated for Members' consideration:

- Appointment of Contractors for Northern Ireland Water offsetting Works Halls Bridge Entry Space
- Appointment of Consultants for Review of Floodlit Synthetic Pitches

The Deputy Director of Finance addressed Members' queries in relation to both appointments.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that

that the report be approved.

ACTION BY: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Burbank 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 at the meeting. She provided her apologies for the May Committee Meeting and thanked the Vice Chair, Committee Members, the Director of Finance and Governance and the Director of Organisation Development (Interim) for their help and support afforded during her term as Chair. The meeting concluded at 6.58pm.

MAYOR