



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ROUND CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON
TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2024 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor A O'Lone
- Members Present** : Aldermen – L Boyle, P Bradley, L Clarke and J Smyth
Councillors – J Burbank, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan,
E McLaughlin and H Magill
- Non Committee
Members Present** : Alderman P Michael
- Officers Present** : Director of Corporate Strategy – H Hall
Director of Organisation Development - J Close
Deputy Director of Finance – J Balmer
Deputy Director of Governance – L Johnston
Head of Finance – R Murray
ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson
Member Services Officer – S Boyd

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors – A Bennington, M Cooper, A McAuley, V McWilliam and L O'Hagan

Director of Finance and Governance - S Cole

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 FI/GEN/027 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE 2023/24 PERFORMANCE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation was to provide Members with an update on the 23/24 performance within the Finance and Governance Directorate.

2. Introduction/Background

The Deputy Director of Finance, John Balmer and the Deputy Director of Governance, Liz Johnston provided Members with a presentation on their section areas.

Following responses to Members' questions, the Chairperson and Members thanked the Deputy Directors for their presentation.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Alderman Boyle and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

NO ACTION

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 HR/ER/002 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION, CONSULTATION ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2024-2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to approve the consultation response to the Local Government Staff Commission's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026.

2. Introduction

The regional Equality, Diversity Group, was established to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across Local Government.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out the direction and focus for Councils in Northern Ireland. First launched in 2011, the Strategy is updated every three to four years.

The Local Government Staff Commission have invited the Council, and other key stakeholders, for their feedback as part of the consultation process.

A copy of the draft Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026 was circulated.

3. Consultation Response

Officers had reviewed the draft Strategy and were content that the three key objectives:-

- An Inclusive Organisational Culture
- Developing Capability and Leaders
- Measuring Performance, Impact and Legal Compliance

and the associated actions are in line with the Council's ambitions for equality and diversity.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the consultation response on the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.2 **CCS/EDP/14 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT, EQUALITY COMMISSION**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to approve the Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission (ECNI) for April 2023-March 2024.

2. Introduction/ Background

Members were reminded that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 required 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 and Action Plan 2023-2026, described certain arrangements that as a public authority, the Council have set-up and were 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 included 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.

A copy of the Council's Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2023-2026 was circulated for information, and was also available on the Council's website.

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 Annual Progress report for April 2023 to March 2024 was circulated for approval.

Following questions from a Member regarding the Youth Voice Programme the Director of Corporate Services responded and agreed that an update would be provided by the relevant Committee. In relation to a question about the provision of an Inclusive Summer Scheme in the Ballyclare area, the Director responded and said that a report would be provided to Committee regarding the locations and arrangements for 2025.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission (ECNI) April 2023-March 2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning/ Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

4.3 CCS/EDP/14 RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to approve the Annual Rural Needs Monitoring report 2023-2024.

2. Introduction/ Background

Members were reminded that on 1 June 2017, the Rural Needs Act became operational for district councils and government departments.

The Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities and local councils, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies, plans and when designing and delivering public services. It also required public authorities to provide information to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on how they have fulfilled this duty on an annual basis and to collate this information in their annual report.

The Rural Needs Annual Monitoring report for 2023 to 2024 was circulated.

Following questions from Members in relation to pollution at the edges of Lough Neagh, the Director of Corporate Strategy agreed that an update would be provided by Officers at the Operations Committee.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring report for 2023-2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations/Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability/Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

4.4 HR/ER/002 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON DRAFT DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to approve the response to the Local Government Staff Commission's (LGSC) consultation on the Draft Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Local Government Employees in Northern Ireland.

2. Introduction

The Department of Communities tasked the LGSC to develop a Draft Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Local Government Employees in Northern Ireland. This policy would apply to all local government employees and would be used when disciplinary action is being considered against an employee.

The LGSC have invited the Council, and other key stakeholders, for their feedback as part of the consultation process.

A copy of the Draft LGSC Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Local Government Employees in Northern Ireland was circulated.

3. Consultation Response

Officers had reviewed the draft policy and the response was circulated for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and agreed that

the consultation response on the Local Government Staff Commission, Draft Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Local Government Employees in Northern Ireland be approved.

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.5 CCS/GEN/011 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ASSOCIATED FRAMEWORK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to approve the Consultation & Engagement Strategy, and associated Framework.

2. Previous Decision of Council

A Communication and Consultation Strategy was approved by Council in January 2017.

3. Background

The Council was committed to listening to people in shaping the Borough and the services that they received.

4. Consultation & Engagement Strategy and Framework

The Strategy had been updated and retitled to reflect best practice, and support changes in its consultation and engagement methodologies. It also built upon the existing approaches and expertise that we have developed.

It enhanced opportunities to engage, connect, and empower, recognising that meaningful consultation and engagement were crucial for effective shaping and improvement.

A copy of the Consultation & Engagement Strategy and Framework was circulated at Appendix 1.

The Strategy and Framework set out Council's vision for consultation and engagement and the principles and standards that we would strive to meet.

These would enable the public to become more involved in consultations and engagements, to build trust and confidence in our systems, ensure understanding of why we are consulting and set out what the public can expect from the Council.

5. Governance

The Strategy, approved in 2017, had been screened for Section 75 and a Rural Needs Impact Assessment had been carried out and was circulated.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the Consultation & Engagement Strategy, and associated Framework, be approved.

ACTION BY: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

4.6 G/LEG/044 STANDING ORDERS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval of the minutes as a true and accurate record of the third meeting of the Standing Orders Working Group on 25 April 2024.

2. Background

Following the decision to conduct a review of the Standing Orders at the December 2023 Policy and Governance Committee, Members agreed to the establishment of a Working Group (task and finish) to review Council's current Standing Orders.

The purpose of the Working Group, consisting of Members and relevant Officers, was to make recommendations, on a task and finish principle, to the Policy and Governance Committee in relation to the revision of the Council's Standing Orders to make them relevant to the current modern governance arrangements.

The third meeting of the group took place on 25 April 2024.

3. Outcome

A copy of the minutes of the third meeting of the Standing Orders Working Group was circulated for Members' consideration.

Following a question from a Member relating to the recent changes which had been made to Standing Orders, the Deputy Director of Governance confirmed that all changes made had been approved at May's Full Council meeting. The Deputy Director further clarified the procedure for Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) as per Standing Orders.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the minutes of the third meeting of the Standing Orders Working Group on 25 April 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 PT/CI/049 QUARTER 4 PROGRESS REPORTS, PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/24

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note the Quarter 4 Performance Progress reports for Finance and Governance, Organisation Development and Council.

2. Background

Members were 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.

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 was approved in June 2023. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with six identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets.

3. Previous Decision of Council

As agreed at the August 2023 Council meeting, quarterly performance reports will be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group.

4. Key Points

Quarter 4 performance progress reports were circulated for Organisation Development, Finance & Governance and overall Council.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the Quarter 4 Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Reports for Organisation Development, Finance & Governance, and overall Council, be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 **OD/OD/002 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP MINUTES**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note the minutes of the Elected Member Development Working Group meeting held on Monday 13 May 2024.

2. Summary

A copy of the minutes of the meeting were circulated.

Following a question from a Member, the Deputy Director of Governance would seek clarification from the Head of Legal Services regarding the position of non-working group Members noting or approving minutes.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the Item be deferred pending clarification on non-working group Members proposing minutes.

*ACTION BY: Deputy Director of Governance, Liz Johnston/Sarah Fenton,
Organisation Development Officer*

5.3 CCS/CS/010 CUSTOMER SERVICES, QUARTER 4 2023/24

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on Customer Service performance, Quarter 4, April 2023 to March 2024.

2. Introduction/Background

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 set out the performance improvement target; 'we will achieve high levels of customer satisfaction', with four indicators set as measures of success.

The Customer Services report for Quarter 4 2023-24 (circulated) provided an update on performance.

In addition, there was an update on key consultations during 2023-24 to serve the Plan, as well as the performance of the new Complaints Handling Procedure during January to March 2024.

Following a question from a Member regarding the last quarter's customer satisfaction figures, the Director of Corporate Strategy agreed to look into the matter and respond directly to the Member.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the Quarter 4 update on Customer Service performance, April 2023 to March 2024, be noted.

ACTION BY: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

5.4 G/GEN/020 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to bring to Members attention the Local Government Commissioner for Standards 2022/23 Annual Report

2. Introduction

As part of the reform of Local Government in Northern Ireland and the transfer of powers and functions including planning to Councils, a new standards regime including a mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors was introduced. The Code set out standards of conduct and behaviour for Councillors with the aim of ensuring confidence in local democratic decision making.

The Local Government Commissioner for Standards provided guidance to assist Councillors to ensure they understood and complied with the Code with the aim of improving ethical standards at a Local Government level.

3. Key Matters

A copy of the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards Annual Report, along with the supporting letter to the Chief Executive was circulated for Members' attention.

The report covered both the investigation and adjudication functions of the Commissioner's Office during the 2022/23 year.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.5 **FC/FA/8 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS & TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide a review of the Council's Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management activities for the 2023/24 financial year for noting.

2 Introduction

Members were reminded that the Council measured and managed its capital expenditure, borrowings and investment activities with reference to the CIPFA Prudential Code. This report provided an update on these activities that took place during the 2023/24 financial year.

3 Previous Decisions of Council

Council approved the Prudential Indicators for 2023/24 to 2025/2026 and the Treasury Management Strategies for 2023/24 in February 2023.

Under the Prudential Code and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services the Council was required to monitor and review its prudential indicators. The key objective of which was to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council were affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Council's Treasury Management Policy required mid-year and annual reports on treasury management activities.

The report compared the approved Prudential Indicators with the outturn position for 2023/24 and the annual report on the Council's borrowing and investment activities for 2023/24.

A copy of the annual report was circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 PT/CI/062 CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2030 (DRAFT) CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note the consultation feedback on the Corporate Plan 2024-2030.

2. Previous Decision of Council

Council agreed in February 2024 to a twelve week public consultation on the Corporate Plan 2024-2030 (draft for consultation).

3. Consultation

On 3 March 2024 a twelve week public consultation commenced to derive feedback from residents, stakeholders, and local businesses, statutory and community planning partners and other bodies with which collaborative working is taking place.

The public consultation closed on 26 May 2024 and 56 responses were received following a campaign which included emails to stakeholders, promotion on social media, face-to-face with residents and publication in the Borough Life Magazine.

The consultation feedback was circulated for information, and the feedback would be considered in the preparation of the Corporate Plan.

The final Corporate Plan 2024-2030 would be brought to Council in June 2024 for approval.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 consultation feedback be noted.

NO ACTION

5.7 PT/CI/060 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25, CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note the consultation feedback on the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25.

2. Background

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

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan set out a range of robust performance targets, along with six identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In January 2024, Council approved the draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25, subject to consultation.

4. Consultation

On 5 February 2024 a twelve week public consultation commenced to derive feedback from residents, stakeholders, local businesses, statutory and community planning partners, and other bodies with which collaborative working is taking place or planned.

An online questionnaire on the Council's corporate website / consultation hub enabled the Council to seek opinions on the key objectives identified within the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan.

The consultation feedback was circulated for information, and would be considered for incorporation into the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25.

The final Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 would be brought to Council in June 2024 for approval.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the consultation feedback on the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 be noted.

NO ACTION

5.8 G-LEG-325/28 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE - THE PRIVATE STREETS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1980 – DEVELOPMENT AT GREENACRE MEWS, NEWTOWNABBIEY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to notify Members that the Department for Infrastructure had adopted a street at Greenacre Mews, Newtownabbey.

2. Background

The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 (the Order) provided the statutory basis for the adoption of roads by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

When DfI issue correspondence to Council, it notifies Members that a street has met the required standard, as set out in the Order, and will be maintained by DfI.

Hence, correspondence had been received from the DfI advising that streets at the above development had now been adopted by DfI Roads (copy correspondence circulated).

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the correspondence be noted.

NO ACTION

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

5.9 PT/CI/061 NILGA AND SOLACE AWARDS UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council nominations for the NILGA and SOLACE Local Government Employee of the Year Award, sponsored by the William Johnston Memorial Trust Award.

2. Introduction/Background

Council submitted applications for the NILGA and SOLACE Local Government Employee of the Year Award, sponsored by the William Johnston Memorial Trust in May 2024.

3. Main body of the report

The Performance team have received notification from NILGA that Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have had three employees shortlisted as nominees in the category of Local Government Employee of the Year:

Sarah Fenton, Organisation Development Officer and Denise McGill, Human Resources Officer and Daryl Ross, Parks Projects Team Leader.

A summary of the nominations is below:

“Sarah's exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication to the development and implementation of the Elected Member Development Learning and Development Strategy demonstrate the qualities of an exemplary employee. Her vision and collaborative approach have not only made this initiative a resounding success but has also paved the way for continuous improvement. We wholeheartedly believe that Sarah is deserving of the Employee of the Year award for her outstanding achievements and commitment to excellence. Sarah embodies our values and lives them vivaciously in the work that she delivers upon and champions individuals to thrive and be the best that they can.”

“Denise McGill's unwavering commitment and dedication to her role as an HR Officer have made a profound impact on our organisation, fostering a culture of psychological safety and trust that empowers team members to excel. Her collaborative approach and positive attitude exemplify the qualities of an outstanding employee and future leader. We wholeheartedly believe that Denise is deserving of the Employee of the Year award for her exceptional contributions and dedication to excellence.”

“Daryl should win the Employee of the Year award due to his exceptional dedication, innovation, and positive impact on colleagues, the department, the council, and the community. His unwavering commitment to excellence, demonstrated through outstanding work ethic, leadership, and contributions to various projects, has significantly elevated the organisation's performance and reputation. Daryl has the ability to go above and beyond in delivering high-quality results while fostering teamwork and enhancing public services embodies the values and objectives of the Council. Daryl's remarkable achievements and lasting impact make them a deserving recipient of the Employee of the Year award.

A further update would be provided to P&G in September.

4. Summary

Sarah Fenton, Organisation Development Officer and Denise McGill, Human Resources Officer and Daryl Ross, Parks Project Team Leader, have been nominated as NILGA Local Government Employee of the Year Award 2024.

Members commended those Officers who had been nominated and wished them all the best of luck.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council nominations for the NILGA and SOLACE Local Government Employee of the Year Award, sponsored by the William Johnston Memorial Trust Award be noted.

NO ACTION

The Chairperson welcomed back Jennifer Close, Director of Organisation Development.

There being no further Committee business the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.25 pm.

MAYOR