



1 September 2022

Committee Chair: Councillor M Magill
Committee Vice-Chair: Alderman M Girvan

Committee Members: Aldermen – T Burns and P Michael

Councillors – H Cushinan, S Flanagan, R Foster,
M Goodman, B Mallon, A McAuley, T McGrann,
N Ramsay, V Robinson, B Webb and R Wilson

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 6.30 pm.**

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 be available in the Café from 5.20

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 PRESENTATION

3.1 Information Governance – Annual Review 2021/22

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 Motions and Proposed Amendments to Motions

4.2 Review of Information Governance Policy

4.3 Review of Business Continuity Policy

4.4 Application for Renewal of Premises for Civil Marriage/Partnerships Ceremonies

4.5 Banking Arrangements

4.6 Remote Council Meetings & Procedure Rules

4.7 Town, Village and Hamlet Branding Update

4.8 Review of Data Protection Policy

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Update on Energy Costs and Efficiency Measures

5.2 Quarterly FOI report

5.3 Finance update – July 2022 (Period 4)

5.4 Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators Annual Report 2021-22

5.5 Prompt Payments Performance

5.6 National Fraud Initiative 2022

5.7 Department for Infrastructure - The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 – Development at Castlewater, Antrim

5.8 Agency Update

5.9 Managing Attendance

5.10 Quarterly Screening Report and Rural Screening

5.11 Annual Progress Report, Equality Commission

5.12 Communication and Customers Channels Report

5.13 Recovery Plan - Performance Progress Report Quarter 4 - 2021-22

5.14 Recruitment Update

6. ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 Capital Progress Report to 31 July 2022

6.2 Procurement Tender Report & Award of Contracts

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – ANNUAL REVIEW 2021/22

Members are advised that a presentation on Information Governance – Annual Review 2021/22 will be made at the meeting.

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 A/GEN /13 MOTIONS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

The Mayor has requested that Amendments to Motions be provided to Member Services in written form prior to a Council meeting.

Officers have therefore reviewed the current procedures in relation to Motions and Amendments, contained within Section 20 & 21 of the Council's Standing Orders (**enclosed**).

Officers consider the information contained within Section 20 & 21 of the Standing Orders still to be appropriate with the following additions:

1. It is suggested that as Motions are provided in advance, any proposed Amendments to Motions should also be provided in advance. However, as Amendments may not be finalised until closer to the meeting date, it is suggested that all proposed Amendments to motions be provided in writing to Member Services by 12 noon, on the day of the Council meeting. This will not prevent new Amendments to be made at the Council meeting. The normal process for proposing an Amendment to a Motion will be unaffected.

Recommendation: that Members approve the incorporation of items listed in point 1 to Section 20 of the Standing Orders

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (Interim)

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

4.2 G/IG/7 REVIEW OF INFORMATION GOVERNANCE POLICY

The purpose of the Information Governance Policy is to provide an overview of the Council's approach to Information Governance, a guide to the procedures in use, and details about the Information Governance management structures within the organisation. The policy enables the Council to ensure that all information is dealt with legally, fairly, securely, efficiently and effectively.

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

The review has identified a number of minor amendments as being required:

- update regarding changes in organisational structure (Deputy Chief Executives, Directors and Deputy Directors)
- inclusion of Rural Needs and Data Protection Impact Assessment statements in accordance with the Policy Framework template.
- version control table added.

The amendments to the policy have been approved by CLT. The draft policy with the amendments incorporated is **enclosed**.

RECOMMENDATION: that the revised Information Governance Policy be approved.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.3 G/BCEP/006 REVIEW OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

This Policy provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities relating to the Council's Business Continuity Management (BCM) system, and details the process of Business Continuity Plan (BCP) development, implementation and review.

In line with the Policy framework the Policy has been reviewed and updated. The review has identified a number of amendments as being required to reflect the introduction of the new Business Continuity Electronic Management System along with the following changes:

- Changes to specific roles titles to reflect management restructure (pages 2 & 5);
- Inclusion of responsibilities for all council staff (page 3);
- Details for evaluation and review of Business Continuity documentation (page 3);
- Changes to Business Continuity Policy contacts (page 3);
- Abstraction of highlighted text. Replication of information held in Business Continuity Management Plan (pages 4 & 5);
- Emphasis on the need for Business Continuity Plan Owners to hold a hard copy of their plans, as recommended in the Business Continuity Audit findings (page 4);
- Details on exercise plans for Business Continuity (page 5);
- Use of ANBC new Policy Framework template, incorporating date of next review and version controls, as recommended in the Business Continuity Audit findings (Policy Title page & page 6).

The amendments to the policy have been approved by CLT. The draft policy with the amendments incorporated is **enclosed**.

RECOMMENDATION: that the revised Business Continuity Policy be approved.

Prepared by: Sara Martin, Corporate Health, Safety and Resilience Officer

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.4 CCS/REG/10 & CCS/REG/4 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 renewal applications have been received from:

- Dunadry Hotel
- Barnabys Restaurant

for the re-approval of an area at the specified premises.

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 any of the notifications to apply for Place Approval and the premises have been formally inspected and no problems have been found with regard to the application.

Dunadry Hotel

Conference Room
Event Space
Garden

Barnabys Restaurant

Turrett Function Room
Garden Suite & Gallery (outside)

RECOMMENDATION: that the named premises are 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: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

4.5 FC/G/2 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members are advised that Mr Matt McDowell and Mr Michael Lavery have been appointed as Director of Parks & Leisure Operations and Director of Waste Operations respectively with effect from 15 August 2022.

RECOMMENDATION: that with effect from 15 August 2022 Mr Matt McDowell and Mr Michael Lavery are:

- a) Authorised signatories to the Council's bank accounts**
- b) Authorised Corporate Credit Card holders**

Prepared by: Gill Cubitt, Financial Performance Manager

Approved by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Governance

4.6 G/LEG/044 REMOTE COUNCIL MEETINGS & PROCEDURE RULES

Members will be aware that the normal operation of Council decision making has been impacted by Covid-19.

The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 provides guidance and direction to Councils in relation to remote Council meetings.

Members agreed an Interim Protocol for Remote Council Meetings in May 2020.

To facilitate hybrid meetings on a permanent basis Officers **enclose** a draft Protocol for Remote Council Meetings for Members consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Protocol for Remote Council Meetings be approved.

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

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

4.7 CCS/CPRM/027 TOWN, VILLAGE AND HAMLET BRANDING UPDATE

Members are reminded that an update was provided to the Policy and Governance Committee in March 2022, which referenced the next phase of the Borough signage project. In response to questions from Members, an audit of signage was requested, which is (enclosed Appendix 1) for consideration. Whilst preparing this audit, a number of anomalies have been identified, which officers are currently addressing, please see imagery (enclosed Appendix 2).

Borough Hamlets

As previously reported, the next stage we are ready to progress is Hamlet signage. An extract from Paper 2 of the Local Area Development Plan (enclosed Appendix 3) designates the following as existing hamlets.

Ballycor	Ballycraigy	Ballyeaston
Bruslee	Craigarogan	Creggan/Cranfield
Groggan	Hillhead	Killead
Kingsmoss	Lowtown	Millbank
Milltown	Moneyglass	Roughfort
Tildarg		

The following table indicates settlements, which the Local Area Development Plan proposes to designate as new hamlets.

Aldergrove	Caddy	Cargin
Creavery	Donegore	Gortgill
Loanends	Maghereagh	Moneynick
Newmill	Rathmore	Tavnaghmore (Tannaghmore)
The Diamond		

Due to the nature of the roads into the hamlets, for safety reasons these signs will be identical to the town and village signs, but it is proposed that they are smaller in size, to minimise any impact on sightlines and road traffic issues.

Designs & Indicative Budget – Hamlet Signage

A two phase approach is proposed, with Phase One concentrating on the existing sixteen hamlets, and Phase Two to cover the proposed hamlets

Members opinions are invited on the draft designs (enclosed Appendix 4). Officers will carry out site visits to each hamlet, to determine the exact number and location of required signage subject to road conditions.

Officers request approval to develop a phased plan for the installation of hamlet branding, with estimated budgets outlined below for each signage option.

Estimated budgets are based on a provisional total of fifty signs, and are subject to site visits and any associated costs for existing signage removal.

A combination of sign sizes could be considered, with Sign B being the preferred option.

Sign A (620x480mm) **£13,000**

Sign B (1060x820mm) **£18,500**

Sign C (1260x1070mm) **£35,000**

Miscellaneous signs

During Covid an extensive audit was carried out which identified a series of tourism, town centre, heritage interpretive and directional signage all across the Borough. Given the diversity of this phase of the project, a working group will be formed to identify which signs can be removed, replaced or rebranded. Once reviewed a further report will be brought back to Members for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: the hamlet signage is progressed, and Members advise on which sign, or combination of signs, they would like to be installed.

Prepared by: Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

4.8 G/IG/7 REVIEW OF DATA PROTECTION POLICY

The processing of personal data is regulated by the UK General Data Protection Regulations ("UK GDPR") and the Data Protection Act (UK) 2018. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is fully committed to complying with the provisions of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act (UK) 2018.

A review of the Council's Data Protection Policy is now required under a two-year review cycle.

The review has identified a number of minor amendments as being required:

- update regarding changes in organisational structure
- inclusion of Rural Needs and Data Protection Impact Assessment statements in accordance with the Policy Framework template
- legislation references updated to UK GDPR
- Subject Access Request Form amended to reflect restructuring
- Subject Rights Request Form added as appendix
- version control table added.

The amendments to the policy have been approved by CLT. The draft policy with the amendments incorporated is **enclosed**.

RECOMMENDATION: that the revised Data Protection Policy be approved.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 PBS/PS/001 UPDATE ON ENERGY COSTS AND EFFICIENCY MEASURES

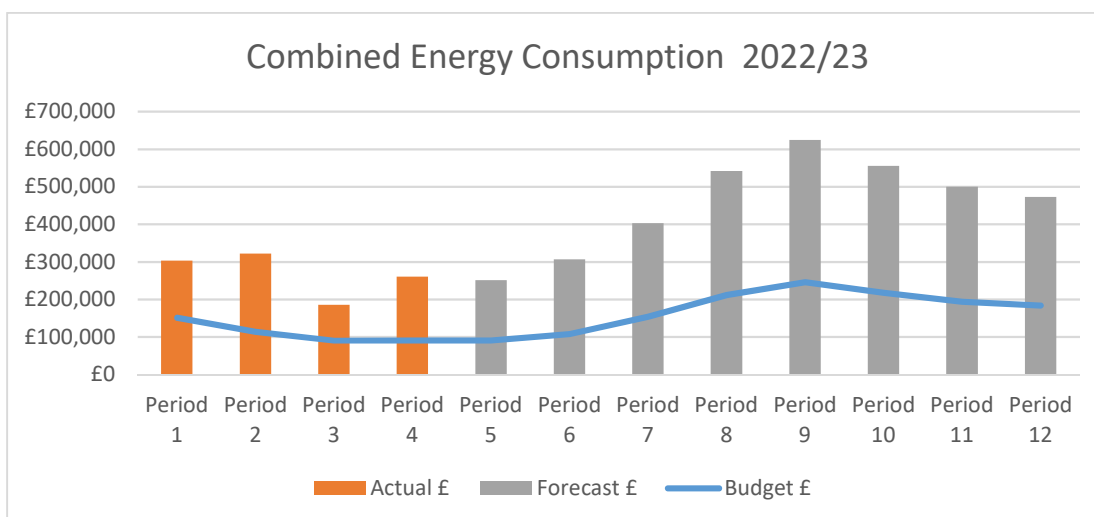
Members are reminded that an Energy Management Action Plan was approved in April 2022 and that the issue of energy use across the Council estate has become increasingly critical in view of the challenges presented by current energy market volatility. Council currently do not have an energy pricing contract since the previous contract expired in March 2022.

The report is presented under the following sections:

- Forecast Outlook for 22/23
- Analysis of Main Council Sites
- Energy Efficiency Measures
- Summary

Forecast Outlook for 22/23

Expenditure budgets have been profiled to reflect seasonal fluctuations for the main sources of energy i.e. gas and electricity. The greatest impacts will therefore be felt in the winter months as can be seen in the graph below:



The table below summarises the budget impact if current prices are sustained for 2022/23.

	Annual Budget	Forecast	Forecast Variance
	£	£	£
Electricity	1,107,844	2,825,282	1,717,438
Gas	634,904	1,405,314	770,410
Biomass/Heating Oil	109,850	125,566	15,716
Total	1,852,598	4,356,162	2,503,564

The adverse variance is currently being mitigated by budget savings from other cost areas especially staff costs. It is not expected however that this mitigation will be sustained during quarters 3 and 4 of 2022/23 and if prices remain high will impact on budget estimates and rates increases for 2023/24.

Analysis of Main Council Sites

As previously reported, the top 5 consumers of energy and expenditure, in order of consumption, are: - Valley Leisure Centre, Mossley Mill, Antrim Forum, Sixmile Leisure Centre and Antrim Civic Centre. In 2021/2022, these buildings equated to 67.5% of the Council's entire energy consumption and were responsible for 70.4% of the entire CO2 emissions output from our built assets. The actual energy costs (i.e. gas, electricity and biomass) for these 5 buildings since the end of March 2022, have more than doubled in one year. In comparing the months April - July 2021 with April - July 2022, actual costs for the 5 properties have risen from £326,000 to £728,000 as set out below:

	Actual Cost for April-July 2021 (£)	Actual Cost for April-July 2022 (£)
Valley Leisure Centre	£99,178	£177,214
Antrim Forum	£60,048	£187,496
Mossley Mill	£69,103	£143,953
Six Mile Leisure Centre	£59,860	£141,365
Antrim Civic Centre	£37,397	£78,218
Total	£325,586	£728,246

The table below highlights the actual changes in consumption within these buildings throughout April-July when comparing a pre-pandemic base year of 2018/19 with April - July 2021/22. Even though energy consumption levels have been reduced in the past four years, primarily due to recent improvements to building management systems, costs have risen significantly this year due to soaring energy prices.

Site	Apr – Jul 18/19 Consumption (kWh)	Apr – Jul 22/23 Consumption (kWh)	% Difference	Apr – Jul 18/19 Cost	Apr – Jul 22/23 Cost	Difference
Antrim Civic Centre	450,244	384,380	-14.6%	£ 35,914	£ 78,218	117.0%
Mossley Mill	786,211	743,369	-5.4%	£ 68,135	£ 143,952	111.3%
Antrim Forum	1,069,559	971,785	-9.1%	£ 94,519	£ 187,496	98.4%
Valley Leisure Centre	1,342,685	1,267,960	-5.6%	£ 75,029	£ 177,2145	136.2%
Six Mile Leisure Centre	1,302,714	934,424	-28.3%	£ 94,172	£ 141,365	50.1%
Total	4,951,413	4,301,918	-13.1%	£ 367,769	£ 728,246	97.9%

Energy Efficiency Measures

The Property Services team is continuously exploring ways to mitigate Council's exposure to the increasing energy costs. Focusing on improvements in the top 5 energy using buildings is the priority and currently a number of feasibility studies and physical improvements are being undertaken/being planned:

Feasibility

- Hydrogeological assessments have been completed for the three wet leisure sites – Valley Leisure Centre, Sixmile Leisure Centre and Antrim Forum – to assess the potential for geothermal energy to be used that could significantly reduce heating costs. Preliminary results are favourable and merit further investigation with test boreholes.
- The potential to use hydroelectric power at Mossley Mill was examined in a feasibility report in 2020. The team is reviewing estimated costs set out in the report in order to be in a position to report to Committee.
- Feasibility studies are in progress to determine the viability of solar energy at the Mossley Mill complex. Although site constraints such as listed building status and NIE connection limitations may impact on the extent of any installation, designs are being progressed to initial costings stage for a rooftop installation together with researching other innovative options on the site.

Minor improvements to improve efficiency

- The replacement of lighting systems in the Theatre at the Mill is progressing through initial costing stages. The current lighting systems have reached the end of their useful life and an energy efficient upgrade will provide for energy and cost savings.
- A comprehensive report on heating controls at Sixmile Leisure Centre has been completed and has identified a number of minor works packages that can be undertaken to improve the efficiency of the Leisure Centre. Discussions have commenced with contractors and Leisure Services on the implementation programme for these improvements.
- Construction work has commenced at the Valley Leisure Centre to make the biomass heating system more efficient. Property Services are working with the leisure centre team and contractors to co-ordinate the necessary upgrades to the heating system.

Other

- Discussions are ongoing with Capital Services in relation to the Combined Heat and Power unit (CHP) at Antrim Forum. The unit has experienced difficulties in harmonising with the existing electrical installations and discussions are ongoing to resolve these issues in order that the CHP can provide the means to reduce energy consumption further.

- Condition reports for all heating installations across the Council's estate have commenced. It is anticipated that the findings will identify the need to replace a number of systems that are currently operating inefficiently and beyond their life expectancy. Any proposals for upgrade or replacement will be based on return of investment principles and emissions awareness.
- The Property Services team is exploring the ability to develop existing Building Management Systems across a number of key sites. The aim is to provide greater monitoring and control within buildings, improving the 'zoning' capability that allows for focused energy use where needed.
- Property Services are actively benchmarking with others where possible to achieve best practice. Case studies are limited at present in Northern Ireland as organisations await the development of a decarbonisation funding framework from the Northern Ireland Executive. As a result, comparators have been sought from local authorities in England who have enjoyed access to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for a number of years. Communication with a number of local authorities is ongoing and has resulted in valuable insight from their experiences in retrofitting existing buildings.
- Property Services are in ongoing discussion with the Department of Economy to explore the potential for funding for the installation of renewable technologies. The collation of Council's comprehensive energy consumption database is proving to be of real value as this allows for clear 'before' and 'after' comparison – this has provided assurance to the Department on our readiness to benefit from investment.

The recent approval of a Capital Fund for Energy Efficiency in Council Properties will be utilised to meet the costs of the actions. Although most of the energy efficiency initiatives are minor in nature and will comprise an upfront investment – the resulting reduction in reduced energy consumption, reduced emissions and lower costs will bring benefits which are of greater significance. All investments will take into account the impact of maintenance and operating costs. In using this Return on Investment principle, the focus is on the amount of time required to repay the upfront investment.

Although implementing energy efficiency initiatives will produce savings in the medium to long term, exposure to increasing costs remains. Property Services will continue to ensure financial prudence, risk management, due diligence and compliance with all the relevant legislation and contract rules. However, implementation requires timeframes that challenge the ability to react quickly to increasing energy costs in the short term.

Through the work of the Energy Performance Officer within the Property Services team, Council has realised savings of over £250,000 in energy and water bills by having a constant focus on energy use - in the past twelve months.

To further supplement these initiatives, an energy awareness campaign has been implemented across all sites. In addition to signage, emails have been

sent to all staff with reminders to switch off lights and electrical equipment when not required.

The email campaign also provides useful hints and tips that staff may find of benefit in reducing home energy bills. The awareness campaign will be sustained throughout the course of the year in an effort to minimise energy wastage. Borough Life will be used to provide energy saving tips to residents as well.

Summary

In summary, officers continue to closely monitor the energy consumption at Council sites and are prioritising a programme of work to reduce consumption, reduce costs and reduce emissions.

Officers also continue to monitor future energy market prices and the uncertain political environment and will build these factors into both the current financial decision making and rates setting for 22/23.

Further update reports on energy costs and the progress of energy efficiency initiatives will be presented to Committee for review.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Stephen Hipkins, Head of Property and Building Services

Agreed by: Clifford Todd, Deputy Director of Operations (Environmental Health, Property and Building Services)

Approved by: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

5.2 G/DPFI/2 QUARTERLY FOI REPORT

A report has been prepared on requests received in the first quarter of the year (1 April to 30 June 2022) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this is **enclosed**.

A summary of the quarter's statistics is as follows:

- There was an 18% increase in the number of requests on the same period the previous year.
- Of the 92 requests received, 75 were under FOI, 14 under EIR and 3 under DPA.
- 83 requests were completed within the quarter.
- 98% of the requests were completed within the legislative deadlines of 20 days for FOI and EIR requests and a calendar month for requests made under DPA.
- The sections that received the most requests in the quarter were Environmental Health (22), Planning (19), Finance (13), Governance (12) and Arts and Culture(12).
- Two appeals were received during the quarter. In both of the appeals the Council's original decision was upheld and no further information was provided.
- No complaints to the ICO were notified within the quarter.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (Interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.3 FINANCE UPDATE – JULY 2022 (PERIOD 4)

The reports below are enclosed for Members information;

- a. Budget report Period 4 2022/23 – the Councils financial position at the end of July 2022 showing a favourable variance of £324K.
- b. Actual Penny Product – 21/22 finalisation – Land and Property Services (LPS) has confirmed that the rates finalisation for 21/22 is £1M. This income has been accrued into the financial statements for 21/22 currently being audited by NIAO and will be received by Council in November 2022.

Actual Penny Product (APP) update Q1 update – an update on the anticipated rate finalised is presented showing a favourable outturn of £299K. Note that this figure will change as property is added to or taken off the property tax base.

- c. Estimates timetable – the schedule of work for the budget setting process for 23/24 is outlined.

RECOMMENDATION: that the reports be noted.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.4 FC/FA/8 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS – ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Members are reminded that the Council approved the Prudential Indicators for 2021/2022 to 2023/2024 and the Treasury Management Strategies for 2021/22 in March 2021.

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

The Council's Treasury Management Policy requires an annual review of treasury management activities.

This report compares the approved Prudential Indicators with the outturn position for 2021/22 and provides the annual report on the Council's borrowing and investment activities for 2021/22. A copy of the report is **enclosed** for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray – Head of Finance

Approved by: John Balmer – Deputy Director of Finance

5.5 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

Members are reminded that 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 April 2022 to 30 June 2022** 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 invoices totalling £12,834,430.

The Council paid 3,679 invoices within the 30-day target. (87%)

The Council paid 2,246 invoices within the 10-day target. (53%)

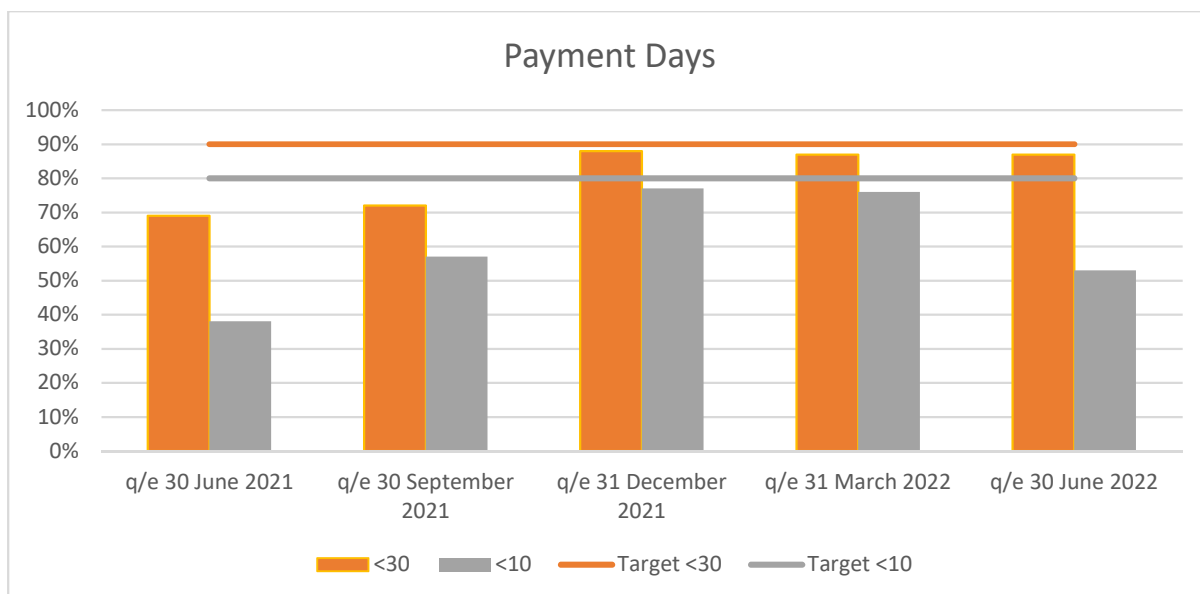
The Council paid 575 invoices outside of the 30-day target. (13%)

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

This compares to quarterly results for 2021/22 as follows:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 30 June 2021	3,352	69%	38%
q/e 30 September 2021	5,867	72%	57%
q/e 31 December 2021	6,575	88%	77%
q/e 31 March 2022	5,539	87%	76%
q/e 30 June 2022	4,254	87%	53%

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



Members will recall that a new finance system went 'live' on 12 April 2021. This impacted on performance whilst the new system and procedures were embedded.

The table and graph above show the performance improvement over the last year. Performance levels have been maintained in quarter 1 for the 30-day figure and additional resources have been applied to regain ground lost for the 10-day figure. Additional analysis by Council departments will be provided in future prompt payment performance updates.

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 30 June 2022 is shown in **Appendix 1**; the Council's performance for Quarter 1 against the average performance for the other Councils for the same Quarter of 2022/23 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (Quarter 1 22/23)	87%	53%
All Councils (Quarter 1 22/23)	89%	70%

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Approved by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Governance

5.6 FI/AUD/112 NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE 2022

Background

The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise run by the Audit Commission and is designed to help participating bodies identify possible cases of fraud and detect and correct under or overpayments from the public purse.

NI Position

The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG), head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), has statutory powers to conduct matching exercises for the purpose of assisting in the prevention and detection of fraud. These powers are contained in the Serious Crime Act 2007, which inserts Articles 4A to 4H to the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

The Council must participate in this exercise and supply the following information for matching to that of other public sector bodies to identify possible fraud or error:

1. Payroll – total payments made to current employees and members from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022; and
2. Trade Creditors payment history and standing data – payment history from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2022 and the current Creditor information held at the date of date extract (from 7 October 2022).

Where a match is found, it indicates that there is an inconsistency that may require further investigation to establish what has caused the match and any further action that may be deemed necessary. Examples of possible matches are as follows:

- An employee with the Council who has a second employment with another Council or public body;
- An employee who is also a supplier to the Council or has been paid through Creditors;
- Suppliers who are associated with other suppliers, eg. through address.

Results notification and possible action

Data extracted will then be matched with other Public Sector datasets and prioritised into the order of how closely the dataset matches. Matches will be available from Thursday 26 January 2023.

The Council is responsible for investigating these matches. All matches will be considered by the Head Internal Audit, who will determine further action if appropriate including invocation of the Fraud Response Plan.

Data Transfer

Datasets must be provided to the Audit Commission from 7 October 2022.

A secure electronic upload facility is available enabling data for NFI to be submitted directly from local computers. This facility is contained within the existing secure NFI web application and consequently provides the same controlled access environment. It features an Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256 Secure Sockets Layer encryption and enables data files to be password protected. No other method of data transfer to the NFI is acceptable.

Access to the NFI website will be restricted to those officers deemed necessary by the Chief Executive.

Participating bodies

Organisations participating in this exercise are those that provide data to the Comptroller and Auditor General, or his agents (such as the Audit Commission), for the purposes of a data matching exercise, which may be on either a mandatory or voluntary basis.

Mandatory bodies are those bodies whose accounts are required to be audited by:

1. the Comptroller and Auditor General, except for bodies audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General by virtue of section 55 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; or
2. a Local Government Auditor.

Since the Council's accounts are audited by a Local Government Auditor the Council must supply the required information.

Other mandatory participants include Central Government, Education Boards, and Health Trusts throughout the United Kingdom.

Further information is available on the Council's website at:

<http://www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/Council/Procurement/National-Fraud-Initiative>

or by contacting Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit on 028 9446 3113 ext. 31395 or at paul.caulcutt@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.7 G-LEG-325/18 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE - THE PRIVATE STREETS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1980 – DEVELOPMENT AT CASTLEWATER, ANTRIM

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

RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.

Prepared by: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

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

5.8 HR/HR/019 AGENCY UPDATE

Members are reminded that agency workers are used across the Council to provide temporary cover for absence such as:

- Maternity leave
- Secondments
- Sickness absence
- Vacant posts

The use of agency workers is subject to an approval process, which requires approval from the Corporate Leadership Team. There is budgetary provision for the majority of posts via departmental salary budgets, salary contingency and grant funding.

Current Agency Workers

Given the exceptional nature of 2020/21, comparison figures for 2019/20 have been used.

The table **enclosed** at Appendix 1 provides an update on the use of agency workers as at July 2022, compared to July 2019 (pre-Covid). It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover which is necessary to provide operational cover at short notice.

Members are advised that in reviewing the number of agency workers it should be noted that:

- **the number of agency workers has reduced from 133 in July 2019, to 111 in July 2022,**
- **there are less agency workers covering sickness absence and vacancies on structures,**
- **agency workers are used more to provide ad-hoc cover.**

Cost of Agency

The expenditure on agency workers in July 2022 is **enclosed** at Appendix 2.

The cost of agency workers has increased for the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 July 2022 at 7% of all staffing costs, compared to 6% for the same period in 2019/2020 (pre-Covid). The increased costs are impacted by:

- the 1.75% NJC pay increase that is also applicable to agency workers, and
- the 1.25% increase in National Insurance from 6 April 2022.

In 2022/2023

There are currently 24 seasonal Grounds Maintenance workers in place and this cover is anticipated to finish in October 2022.

Our Summer Schemes resumed in July/August 2022 and 46 Summer Scheme Leaders were recruited in July. The summer schemes ended on 19 August 2022.

It is anticipated that the need for agency workers will remain high with current levels of recruitment. Agency workers will continue to be used to support ad-hoc, seasonal and temporary cover as required.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Pauline Greer, Human Resources Manager

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.9 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the management of attendance from April 2022 – July 2022 (summary enclosed).

ABSENCE – APRIL 2021 TO JULY 2022

Members are advised that absence at the end of July was above target by 1.18 days with 5.27 average days per employee lost against a target of 4.09 days. Covid absence is not included in the reported figures.

A number of long term absence cases have resulted in employees exhausting their sick pay entitlement and although no additional cost is incurred by the Council during the 'no pay' periods – these days lost are still included in the absence figures.

If days lost to employees who were not in receipt of sick pay were not included in the absence figures, the average days lost per employee at the end of July 2022 would have been 4.39 days.

There has been a small decrease in 100% attendance with 82% of staff achieving this compared to 86% for the same period in 2021/22.

Analysis of this month's absence figures have highlighted the following:

Long term absence

- Accounts for 90% of the absence figures.
- The main reason for long term absence remains within the "other category" of absence. Types of absence include:
 - Absence following family bereavement
 - Stress/Work related stress
 - Surgery
 - Road Traffic Accident
 - Heart related issues
- Since May 2022, 1 Formal Case Review case has been concluded and is at appeal stage. This leaves 8 absence cases at Formal Case Review stage with 2 cases heard with outcomes pending, 1 in progress and 4 to be progressed to Formal Case review.
- Potential for 1 case to progress to Ill Health Retirement
- 7 long term cases have exhausted their sick pay entitlement
- Since May 2022, 11 long term cases returned to work.

Short term absence

- Accounts for 10% of the absence figures.
- The main reasons for absence are:
 - Other - Cold/flu, vomiting

- o Musculoskeletal problems
 - o Back and neck problems
 - o Stress Depression, Mental Health
 - o Infection
- Since May 2022, 13 short term cases of absence returned to work.

It is noted that absence related to stress (including work related stress) currently accounts for 43% of the overall absence (both long term and short term).

Wellbeing focus

The Council remains focused on encouraging health and wellbeing in the workplace, and will continue to offer and implement the following initiatives:

- Promotion of an Employee Assistance Programme through Inspire offering 24/7 confidential support
- Health checks
- Breast Screening through Action Cancer
- Occupational Health Referrals and Physio Treatments
- Cycle to work scheme
- Flu vaccination programme
- Mental Health briefings and online courses for employees and managers
- Facilitating access to Council Leisure Facilities through the staff membership scheme
- Covid 19 advice, guidance, the HR Team providing a 24/7 HR Support line to help employees with Covid queries

Continued targeted actions

- The Head of HR and HR Manager hold bi-monthly meetings with relevant Deputy Chief Executives, Deputy Directors/Heads of Service to schedule formal case reviews where appropriate and to agree next steps for any further complex cases
- Monthly case management discussion meetings scheduled to review complex cases with an Occupational Health consultant. Case managers will attend these sessions to ensure effective use of the Occupational Health service and to support earlier returns to work where possible.
- Information is provided to Heads of Service on an in-depth analysis of sickness absence patterns and trends
- HR Officers work directly with their service area managers on absence cases, agreeing action plans to address the cases effectively
- Training commenced for managers on how to effectively manage their absence caseloads, how to have difficult conversations and absence management toolkits under development to help managers
- Wellness meetings are held in person or virtually if required with absent employees along with line managers to maintain regular contact

- Suitable return to work options are identified e.g. alternative duties across the organisation
- Timely referrals to Occupational Health (Consultant or Nurse) and use of Physio provision where appropriate, including reviewing the effectiveness of these services
- For employees who have triggered the absence threshold, Managers and HR ensure absence review meetings are carried out in a timely manner
- Ongoing promotion of the wellbeing resource tool, 'STAYWELL' across the organisation in addition to the ongoing support services from Inspire and the courses available through Northern Trust Recovery College

Work is underway to develop an Absence Improvement Action Plan for 2022-2023 and following consultation this will be shared with Members. It is envisaged that the plan will incorporate the targeted actions noted whilst also including key principles and good practice as set out within the Northern Ireland Audit Office guidance 2020.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.10 CCS/EDP/7 QUARTERLY SCREENING REPORT AND RURAL SCREENING

Members are advised that in line with the Council's Equality Scheme it was agreed to provide quarterly updates on the screening of policies under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the Council gave a commitment to apply screening methodology to all new and revised policies. Where necessary and appropriate, these new policies would be subject to further equality impact assessment.

SECTION 75 AND RURAL SCREENINGS

The policies noted below have been screened between April to June 2022.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Dual language Street Sign Policy	1
Clotworthy Coffee Shop Refurbishment	1
Community Planning Capital Grants	1
Old Courthouse Café Refurbishment	1
Heater Lending Scheme	1

- (1) Screened with no mitigation
- (2) Screened with mitigation
- (3) Screened and EQIA required

A separate report on consultations will be provided to Committee in October, detailing the performance, feedback and actions plans for consultations carried out in quarter one and two.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Customer Services Officer

Agreed by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.11 CCS/EDP/7 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT, 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 2021 to April 2022 is **enclosed** for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Customer Services Officer

Agreed by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.12 CCS/CS/006 COMMUNICATIONS & CUSTOMERS CHANNEL REPORT

Members are reminded that the Corporate Recovery & Improvement Plan for 2022-23 sets out the following objective, “We will achieve high levels of customer satisfaction”. This report provides an update on Performance Improvement Indicators in the pursuit of this target.

The measurement of success in 2022-23 will be attaining the following:

- We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services.

2022-22 Performance Improvement Indicator (bold)	2021-22 Cumulative	2021-22 Quarter Four	Target 2022-23	2022-23 Quarter One
We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services.	87.5%	N/A	80%	89%

Satisfaction with overall Council services is measured in each issue of Borough Life magazine. The July issue featured a survey on the Councils Digital Services, and received 180 responses from residents.

- The percentage of abandoned calls will be 6.5% (or less).

2022-22 Performance Improvement Indicator (bold)	2021-22 Cumulative	2021-22 Quarter Four	Target 2022-23	2022-23 Quarter One
The percentage of abandoned calls will be 6.5% (or less).	6.1%	5.7%	6.5%	5%

The number of abandoned calls continued to reduce in quarter one. The customer services team provide regular reports to management on telephone and live chat performance, and are engaging with officers in 2022-23 to review practices and identify areas for training and support.

- We have achieved at least 600,000 online transactions.

2022-22 Performance Improvement Indicator (bold)	2021-22 Cumulative	2021-22 Quarter Four	Target 2022-23	2022-23 Quarter One
We have achieved at least 600,000 online transactions.	652,593	195,309	600,000	190,766

Online transactions continue to be reviewed, with additional areas for self-service transactions being explored.

- There are at least 5,062 downloads of the Residents App.

2022-22 Performance Improvement Indicator (bold)	2021-22 Cumulative	2021-22 Quarter Four	Target 2022-23	2022-23 Quarter One
There are at least 5,062 downloads of the Residents App.	14,481	4,037	5,062	3,475
Total downloads of Residents App (To date).	29,938	29,938	35,000	33,413

The Residents App was updated in 2021-22, to enable residents to book, and manage, their leisure activities, which prompted a strong growth in downloads. Additional functionality continues to be explored, and promotion of the benefits and usage of the Residents App is ongoing.

The performance of the Corporate Recovery & Improvement Policy 2022-23 will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Policy & Governance and Audit Risk Committees, and within the Annual Report on Performance 2022-23 (Self-Assessment), which will be reviewed by Council and published on the Councils website by 30 September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Agreed by: Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.13 PT/CI/038 RECOVERY PLAN - PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 4 - 2021-22

Members are 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.

In response to the pandemic, Council produced a Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 which was approved in August 2021. This serves to ensure the recovery of our services and meeting the requirements of our statutory duties.

Members will know that the Council normally produces an annual Corporate Improvement Plan, however, given the uncertainty in the short term about recovery during 2021-22, we are unable to set targets for improvement.

Members agreed that we will measure and monitor the performance of the corporate indicators as set out in the Recovery Plan 2021-23.

The Quarter Four Performance Progress report was reported to the Audit and Risk Committee on the 21 June for review and noting.

A progress report for quarter four is **enclosed** for Members' attention.

RECOMMENDATION: that the 2021-22 Performance Progress Report Quarter four is noted.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance and Transformation Officer

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (Interim)

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.14 HR/HR/14 RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Members are advised that the Human Resources section are currently recruiting c.149.5 full time equivalent (FTE) posts across the Council. In addition, there are 10 campaigns for casual roles which will generate multiple appointments.

With the challenging nature of the current recruitment market there are number of approaches to expedite this recruitment at pace, and to offer entry and early career opportunities for our communities. A summary of the current activity is as follows:

Recruitment Process

A review of the application process is underway to make it easier for applicants to apply. Guidance notes for applicants are under review to help candidates with clear examples of how to complete the application form correctly.

As part of our agreed restructure process, it has been agreed with Trade Unions that internal trawls are carried out for posts beneath Head of Service level as the first stage of recruitment to provide and promote internal opportunities for all employees. Whilst this process has provided a significant number of internal promotions, it also lengthens the process to fill posts, with each post being advertised at least twice. It is anticipated that once the posts from restructuring are filled that we resume advertising all permanent vacancies externally, subject to consultation with Trade Unions.

The competitive recruitment market has created challenges, in some key areas. To address these challenges we have modified criteria for the roles and advertised in specialist sites. For Leisure Attendant roles the option to train to be a lifeguard has continued to be promoted, with those recruited being provided training on commencement to obtain their National Pool Lifeguard Qualification. To further support the attraction to these roles, the age restriction of 18 is being removed, risk assessments will be in place to ensure young workers are protected in the workplace.

Work will commence in January to introduce the planned new HR system which will include a streamlined recruitment process. This digitisation of the current heavily manual HR process will enable the HR team to focus on further developing and building capacity within the organisation for early careers and employee development.

Media & Social Media

A variety of advertising methods are currently used including Internal Trawls, Advertising in local papers and Belfast Telegraph, Council's job page, Local Government Composite Advert, JobApplyNI and NIJobs.

In addition, Council's social media platforms are used to promote opportunities and paid for advertising used across appropriate channels to promote individual jobs to specific or appropriate audiences.

An internal communication plan will be targeted at employees to share and connect these posts with wider audiences, with staff acting as advocates for the organisation promoting the opportunities available through their own personal channels and networks.

In September, an internal campaign will run to ensure all staff are aware of the opportunities that are available to internally apply for new opportunities and to encourage the sharing of available jobs to their wider networks.

Trainees & Skills Development

Initiatives undertaken to further attract applicants includes the participation in the Job Start Scheme with three of the applicants being successful in getting a post with Council. There are a further two participants working within the parks section.

Council continues to provide skills development opportunities across departments e.g. there are currently 6 Parks employees studying at Greenmount College to complete an NVQ in Horticulture and a further uptake is planned for September 2022. Employees are also supported where required to achieve their driving licence or additional categories of licence to enable them to progress in their roles.

Members are reminded that a number of trainee posts were approved by Council in July as part of a wider restructure update and a programme to deliver and resource these posts is now under development. These new opportunities will provide the successful candidates with the skills and knowledge to be both successful in their roles and developed through a pathway programme as leaders for the future. Trainees will access learning through a combination of internal and external training supported by robust self-development packages. To support the candidates it is proposed that line managers will be developed as Coaches and Mentors ensuring the appropriate learning environment to enable trainees to flourish within the organisation.

Consideration will be given where appropriate to availing of the Government traineeship programme.

There are also specific trainee opportunities to support business projects/initiatives e.g. a trainee fleet officer and a trainee energy officer. Essential qualifications for the various roles will be completed as part of the programme and in conjunction with relevant colleges where applicable. All Trainees will have a mentor, to support their learning and success within the programme.

Open Days & Job Fairs

Members of the HR team have participated in Council job fairs and this has proven successful to recruit casual roles. Throughout the next quarter the team have planned further targeted Officers open recruitment days with the first larger scale exercise planned for the end of September 2022 at the Antrim Forum Leisure Centre. All leisure vacancies will be promoted at these events, with the possibility for pool tests and interviews being held on the day. Work will also be undertaken with Local Schools and Colleges to promote opportunities.

Following this event a rolling programme of open days will recruit operational roles across the Council including other casual roles for parks, waste and community planning.

Officers will collaborate with Economic Development to build awareness of opportunities within Council as part of wider skills development. It is planned that officers will engage with schools across the Borough to work in partnership to promote pathways for pupils to employment and to further local government apprenticeship opportunities when possible.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted and an update be provided at a future meeting.

Prepared by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Agreed by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive