



3 March 2022

Committee Chair: Alderman P Michael

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor T McGrann

Committee Members: Councillors – M Cooper, H Cushinan, R Foster, S Flanagan, N Kelly, A McAuley, M Magill, B Mallon, N Ramsay, V Robinson, M Stewart, B Webb and R Wilson

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee will be held in the **Chamber, Mossley Mill on Tuesday 8 March 2022 at 6.30pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Dixon".

Jacqui Dixon, BSc MBA
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

For any queries please contact Member Services:

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A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 Presentation – Digital Services Supporting Corporate Recovery

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 Recruitment Advertising

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 Budget Report – January 2022 Period 10

5.2 Local Government Partnership Panel Meeting

5.3 Agency Staff Update

5.4 Managing Attendance

5.5 Recovery Plan – Performance Progress Report Quarter Three

5.6 Town, Village and Hamlet Signage Update

5.7 Implementation of Council Support for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Against Israel Campaign

5.8 Social Value in Construction Contracts - Glengormley Office Block

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 Procurement Tender Reports and Award of Contracts

6.2 Pay Agreements 2021

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2022**

3. PRESENTATION

3.1 PRESENTATION – DIGITAL SERVICES SUPPORTING CORPORATE RECOVERY

Members are advised that the Head of ICT will make a presentation at the meeting.

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 HR/GEN/019 RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING

Recruitment within the Council is returning to pre-pandemic levels and as the recent restructure exercise moves into the final stages and more external recruitment is expected, it is recommended that the Council continues to monitor recruitment advertising going forward.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic all external vacancies were advertised through a composite local government advertisement process. This process was led by Belfast City Council and was also used by other Councils. Through this process, vacancies were advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, Sunday Life and online through NI Job Finder.

A review is being carried out across all Councils to establish whether to continue using the composite advert process. This process has a longer lead in time, more restrictive deadlines, has minimal flexibility and attracts a lower number of candidates.

Given the need to focus on recovery and provide internal opportunities to staff, it was agreed that all vacancies below Head of Service level would be internally trawled in the first instance, subject to review. If posts are not filled internally, they are advertised externally through the Council's recruitment system GETGOT and promoted on iConnect, staff email and noticeboards, the Council's social pages (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and ANBorough Jobs), NIJobs, Jobs and Benefits Office and through the Belfast Telegraph and Sunday Life.

NIJobs provides a platform to upload job advertisements quickly and gives flexible control over the timelines. Job sites offer a range of features including pushing jobs to be advertised on a local radio, social media channels, local business publications. Job alerts are also sent to registered applicants who match the job criteria thus providing a targeted approach for recruiting specialist roles.

NIJobs has been cost effective with advertisements reaching a wider applicant pool and giving us greater control in advertising our vacancies.

In the meantime, depending on timescales and to support the effective filling of posts, the following process for recruitment advertising is recommended :-

- Council vacancies are advertised directly with the Belfast Telegraph and Sunday Life or via composite advert, dependant on timescales,
- Council vacancies will in addition be advertised through GETGOT, iConnect, staff email and noticeboards, Council's social pages (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and ANBorough Jobs) and NIJobs,
- All vacancies will be advertised with the Jobs and Benefits Office,

- Elected Members will be advised of all posts being externally advertised. The cost, timescale, applicant source and reach/volume of applicants, will be monitored over 6 months and a further update report provided.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted and a further update report be provided to Committee following review in 6 months.

Prepared by: Pauline Greer, Human Resources Manager

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – JANUARY 2022 – Period 10

A budget report for January 2022 – Period 10 is enclosed for Members information.

The Council's financial position at the end of January 2022 shows a favourable variance of £1.36m.

Should the favourable position continue until the end of the financial year, contributions may be made to Reserves to offset future operational or rates losses, or for Borough Recovery and Strategic Projects.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Capital

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

5.2 CE/OA/012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP PANEL MEETING

The Local Government Partnership Panel provides a structured, political relationship between central and local government to discuss strategic policy and operational matters of mutual interest and concern.

Following postponement of their scheduled meeting on 19 January 2022, the Partnership Panel met on the 16 February 2022. Support material received in relation to this meeting is **enclosed** for Members' Information.

The next meeting of the panel is planned for 29 June 2022.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

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

5.3 HR/HR/019 - AGENCY STAFF UPDATE

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

- Maternity leave
- Secondments
- Sickness absence
- Vacant posts

The use of agency staff is subject to a rigorous approval process, which requires the approval of the Corporate Leadership Team and there is budgetary provision for the majority of posts filled via departmental salary budgets, salary contingency and grant funding.

The table appended provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at January 2022 as compared to January 2021. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (**enclosed** at Appendix 1).

Appendix 2, **enclosed**, sets out expenditure on agency workers in January 2022.

The cost of agency staff has increased for the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 January 2022 at 7% of all staffing costs compared to 3.9% for the same period last year. It should be noted that agency expenditure was significantly reduced last year following the release of agency workers in May 2020. This year's costs have also increased due to the late application of the April 2020 pay award and the respective back charges incurred.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Agreed by: Pauline Greer, Human Resources Manager and Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.4 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the management of attendance from April 2021 – January 2022 (summary **enclosed**).

April 2021 to January 2022 - Attendance Update

Members are advised that absence at the end of January 2022 was 12.43 average days per employee against a target of 10.23 days. Target days for 2021/22 is 12 average days lost per employee.

Whilst COVID related absence is excluded from these figures, this figure does include days lost for employees who were not in receipt of sick pay for part of their absence. No additional cost is incurred by the Council during the 'no pay' periods.

If days lost to employees who were not in receipt of sick pay were not included in these figures, the average days lost per employee at the end of January 2022 would have been 11.28 days.

Reasons for absence

In January, long term cases (in excess of 20 days) continued to account for 87% of absence, representing 17 employees (23 employees in December). Stress remains the main cause for long term cases, currently representing 53% of these absences which is a small decrease from 56% in December.

Short term cases account for 23% of absence. The main reason for short term cases remain minor illnesses including colds and infections, both of which are typical of the season.

Actions to improve absence levels

HR Business Partners continue to work with Heads of Service and Managers to monitor absence cases, and to do all that is possible to proactively accomplish employee health and welling in order to improve the ongoing management of attendance.

Actions include:

1. 9 Formal Case Reviews will now be undertaken
2. The Director of Organisation Development and Head of HR will arrange meetings with relevant Deputy Chief Executives, Deputy Directors/Heads of Service to plan the formal case reviews and to agree next steps for any further complex cases.
3. Virtual meetings or telephone calls will be undertaken with absent employees for regular contact
4. Identification of plausible return to work options e.g. alternative duties across the organisation.

5. Timely referrals to Occupational Health and use of Physio provision where appropriate
6. Continued promotion of Inspire, Staywell hub and Northern Trust Services

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Data Analyst

Reviewed by: Jennifer Close, Head of Human Resources

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.5 PT/CI/038 RECOVERY PLAN - PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER THREE

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, we are unable to set targets for improvement. Members have agreed that we will measure and monitor the performance of the corporate indicators as set out in the Recovery Plan 2021-23.

The Quarter Three Performance Progress report will also be taken to the Audit and Risk Committee on the 22nd March for review and noting.

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

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

Prepared by: James Porter, Performance and Transformation Officer

Agreed by: Helen Hall, Head of Performance and Transformation

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

5.6 CCS/CPRM/027 TOWN, VILLAGE AND HAMLET SIGNAGE UPDATE

Members will be familiar with the welcome signs on the arterial routes into our five main towns, Antrim, Ballyclare, Crumlin, Glengormley and Randalstown which were completed in 2019.

Welcome signage for the Borough's villages was completed in February 2022 for Ballynure, Ballyrobert, Burnside, Doagh, Dunadry, Parkgate, Straid, Templepatrick, Toome and Whiteabbey. (Images are **to follow**).

The next phase of the Borough signage project will see welcome signage located in the following hamlets:

Aldergrove	Ballyclare	Ballycraigy
Ballyeaston	Bruslee	Caddy
Cragin	Craigarogan	Creavery
Creggan/Cranfield	Donegore	Gortgill
Groggan	Hillhead	Killead
Kingsmoss	Loanends	Lowtown
Maghereagh	Millbank	Milltown
Moneyglass	Moneynick	Newmill
Rathmore	Roughfort	Tildarg
Tavnaghmore	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 slightly smaller in size. This will minimise any impact on site lines and road traffic issues.

Town, village, hamlet designations are advised by the Planning Section and documented in the Council's Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Nicola McCullough, Head of Communications and Customers

Approved by: Debbie Rogers, Director of Organisation Development

5.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL CAMPAIGN

Correspondence has been received from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council regarding support for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions against Israel Campaign (BDS).

A copy of the correspondence is **enclosed** for Members information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

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

5.8 FI/PRO/GEN/042 SOCIAL VALUE IN CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS - GLENGORMLEY OFFICE BLOCK

Members will recall that at the September 2021 Policy and Governance Committee Members were updated following Minister Murphy's announcement introducing mandatory scoring of social value within public procurement contracts.

Within the Councils capital programme, the next significant works to be tendered will be the Glengormley Office Block and social value clauses will be included as scored award criteria.

The Public Contract Regulations 2015 which provides the legal framework, specifically allows for incorporating social value into specifications, contract performance, selection criteria and award criteria.

This report set out how 'social value' will be considered in this project and is detailed under the following sections:

- Building design
- Mandatory award criteria
- Scored award criteria

Building Design

One of the objectives of the building design is that the project achieves an 'excellence' rating under BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method).

BREEAM looks beyond operational 'carbon footprint' alone, taking a holistic approach to the lifecycle of a building and it's environmental, social and economic sustainability performance.

The assessment uses recognised measures of performance to evaluate a buildings specification, design construction and use across the factors below:

- Energy and water use
- Internal environment (health and well-being)
- Management processes
- Pollution
- Transport
- Materials
- Waste
- Ecology

Mandatory Award Criteria

Social values clauses will be included within the mandatory award criteria re.:

- Payment of the 'Living Wage' to all workers involved in construction
- Clauses re unlawful discrimination and equality of opportunity
- Requirement for contractor to hold Health and Safety Management certification to ISO18001/45001 to promote safe working practices and environments

- Requirement for contractor to hold certification to ISO14001 for Environmental Management System to promote sustainability
- Human rights standards e.g. Modern slavery

Scored Award Criteria

From 1st June 2022, following the policy update, public tenders must include a minimum of 10% of the total award criteria to score social value. It is envisaged that the measures most appropriate to this contract will focus on increasing secure employment and skills and promotion of well-being.

Questions will be centred around:

- New employment or training opportunities e.g. number of weeks work for previously unemployed workers
- Workforce education and skills development e.g. apprenticeship hours
- Increased opportunity for disabled people e.g. no of weeks of project employment for disabled workers.

In promotion of well-being, scored award criteria will likely focus on how the successful tenderer can promote and influence well-being within the local community e.g. donation of time or money to community events or projects. This emphasis of 'social value' within public procurement will be further developed in all Council public procurements and indeed it is expected that the scored element of the award criteria will increase to 20% from June 2023. Further project updates on the Glengormley Office Block including social value elements will be provided as the project progresses.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

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