



29 August 2024

Committee Chairperson: Councillor A O'Lone

Committee Vice-Chairperson: Alderman L Boyle

Committee Members: Aldermen – P Bradley, L Clarke, J Smyth

Councillors – A Bennington, J Burbank, M Cooper, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan, H Magill, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, V McWilliam and L O'Hagan

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 3 September 2024 at 6.30pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

Richard Baker, GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the Café from 5.20pm

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 Cyber Security – Graham Smyth

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 Dual Language Street Sign Applications

4.2 Multi-Agency Protocols – District Council Mutual Aid Protocol

4.3 Schedule of Meetings of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025

4.4 Customer Services Update Report

4.5 2023/24 Annual Self-Assessment Report on Performance

4.6 Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 - Performance
Progress Report Quarter 1

4.7 Performance Improvement Policy

4.8 Corporate Performance Management Updated Timetable

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 Prompt Payment Performance

5.2 National Fraud Initiative 2024/25

5.3 Quarter 1 Report on FOI/EIR/DPA Requests

5.4 Budget Report – Period 4, April 2024 to July 2024

5.5 Managing Attendance Quarter 1 2024/25

5.6 Members' Attendance at Meetings – December 2023 to May 2024

5.7 Section 75 Equality and Rural Screening Quarterly Update

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 ICT Capital Spend 2024 – 2027

6.2 Financial Management and Human Resources Information System

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2024**

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 CYBER SECURITY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to provide Members with an update on Cyber Security within Council.

2. Introduction/Background

The Head of ICT will provide a presentation summarising the key focus areas on Cyber Security .

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared and Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Dual Language Street Sign applications at

Stage 1 (Old Mill Drive) be approved.

Stage 3a (Bawnmore Drive), 3b (Hollybrook Road) be approved.

Stage 3c (Longlands Court), 3d (St Joseph's Court) are not approved.

2. Background

Members are reminded that in accordance with the Dual Language Street Sign Policy adopted by Council on 30 May 2022 (enclosed at Appendix 1), the following update outlines the current status of applications received.

3. Application Update

STAGE 1: PETITION VERIFICATION

One application has been received at stage 1:

OLD MILL DRIVE, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 7XP

The occupiers signing the petition have been evidenced by their listing on the current Electoral Register and meet the one third threshold as required within the approved Policy.

STAGE 2: RESIDENTS CANVASS

There are no applications at stage 2.

STAGE 3: STREET SIGN INSTALLATION

Four applications have progressed to stage 3:

- a) BAWNMORE DRIVE, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 7GD
- b) HOLLYBROOK ROAD, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 4ZT

The occupiers of the above streets have been canvassed. The threshold of two thirds or more in favour of the erection of a second language street sign has been met, as required within the approved policy.

A map and outline costings are enclosed at Appendix 2 and 3.

- c) LONGLANDS COURT, NEWTOWNABBAY, BT36 7LY
- d) ST JOSEPH'S COURT, CRUMLIN, BT29 4WG

The occupiers of the above streets have been canvassed and the threshold of two thirds or more in favour of the erection of a second language street sign has not been met, as required within the approved policy.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Dual Language Street Sign applications at:-

- (a) Stage 1 (Old Mill Drive) be approved;**
- (b) Stage 3a (Bawnmore Drive), 3b (Hollybrook Road) be approved;**
- (c) Stage 3c (Longlands Court), 3d (St Joseph's Court) are not approved as the threshold of two thirds or more in favour of the erection of a second language street sign has not been met as required within the approved policy.**

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.2 G/BCEP/5 MULTI-AGENCY PROTOCOLS – DISTRICT COUNCIL MUTUAL AID PROTOCOL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the signing of the updated District Council Mutual Aid Protocol.

2. Introduction/Background

This Protocol was initially developed in 2009. It provides a statement of intent, rather than a binding Protocol, to enable Councils to provide mutual aid to each other during an emergency or business continuity disruption that goes beyond the resources of an individual Council.

Activation of the Protocol will be via formal request by the Chief Executive or nominated representative of the affected Council to seek the assistance of another Council, in terms of staff, equipment or other resources.

The Council requesting the aid will co-ordinate the support provided and take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the staff provided. They will also ensure that staff provided are appropriately authorised to work in the affected Council's jurisdiction.

The CLT have agreed that the Council should once more enter into the District Council Mutual Aid Protocol (**enclosed**).

3. Previous Decision of Council

The previous Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was approved by Council in June 2018.

4. Changes to MOU

Since the last signing of the Protocol back in 2018, there have been some updates within Civil Contingencies. This includes the updated NI Civil Contingencies Framework: Building Resilience Together 2021 replacing the NI Civil Contingencies Framework 2011. The Civil Contingencies Act and the NI Risk Register both acknowledge that existing capabilities to deal with an emergency may be constrained and organisations will work together, using mutual aid as a means of addressing this.

5. Financial Position/Implication

If the Protocol is instigated, the Chief Executive of the Council receiving the request will respond and if available at the time, provide mutual aid including goods, services and staff on a cost recovery basis.

6. Summary

It is essential that Councils have the ability to work together in the event of a

localised emergency, such as the flooding experienced in 2023 by Newry and Mourne.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the signing of the updated District Mutual Aid Protocol be approved.

Prepared by: Elaine Girvan, Head of Health, Safety and Resilience

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.3 G/MSMO/031 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the Schedule of Meetings for the period 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025.

2. Introduction

It is standard practice for the Schedule of Meetings for the year from 1 January to 31 December to be approved by Members.

3. Schedule

The following schedule of dates for Council and Committee meetings are proposed for the period 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025.

Meetings marked in **red** are held at Antrim Civic Centre, while those in black are held at Mossley Mill. All meetings commence at 6.30 pm with the exception of the Planning Committee which will start at 6 pm.

** Denotes change of date due to bank/public holiday/annual meeting.*

Council / Committee Meetings	Date of Meeting
Operations Committee	Monday 6 January 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 7 January 2025
Community Development Committee	Monday 13 January 2025
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 14 January 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 20 January 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 27 January 2025
Operations Committee	Monday 3 February 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 4 February 2025
Community Development Committee	Monday 10 February 2025
Special Council Meeting	Monday 10 February 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 17 February 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 24 February 2025
Operations Committee	Monday 3 March 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 4 March 2025
Community Development Committee	Monday 10 March 2025
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 11 March 2025
Planning Committee	Tuesday 18 March 2025*
Audit and Risk Committee	Wednesday 19 March 2025*
Council Meeting	Monday 31 March 2025

Operations Committee	Monday 7 April 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 8 April 2025
Community Development Committee	Monday 14 April 2025
Planning Committee	Wednesday 23 April 2025*
Council Meeting	Monday 28 April 2025
Operations Committee	Tuesday 6 May 2025*
Policy & Governance Committee	Wednesday 7 May 2025*
Community Development Committee	Monday 12 May 2025
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 13 May 2025
Planning Meeting	Monday 19 May 2025
Council Meeting	Tuesday 27 May 2025*
Annual Council Meeting	Monday 2 June 2025
Operations Committee	Monday 9 June 2025*
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 10 June 2025*
Community Development Committee	Monday 16 June 2025*
Planning Committee	Monday 23 June 2025
Audit and Risk Committee	Tuesday 24 June 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 30 June 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 21 July 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 28 July 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 18 August 2025
Council Meeting	Tuesday 26 August 2025*
Operations Committee	Monday 1 September 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 2 September 2025
Community Development Committee	Monday 8 September 2025
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 9 September 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 15 September 2025
Audit and Risk Committee	Tuesday 16 September 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 29 September 2025
Operations Committee	Monday 6 October 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 7 October 2025
Community Development Committee	Monday 13 October 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 20 October 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 27 October 2025
Operations Committee	Monday 3 November 2025
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 4 November 2025

Community Development Committee	Monday 10 November 2025
Economic Development Committee	Tuesday 11 November 2025
Planning Committee	Monday 17 November 2025
Council Meeting	Monday 24 November 2025
Operations Committee	Monday 1 December 2025
Policy & Governance	Tuesday 2 December 2025
Community Development Committee	Wednesday 3 December 2025*
Planning Committee	Monday 8 December 2025*
Audit and Risk Committee	Tuesday 9 December 2025*
Council Meeting	Monday 15 December 2025*

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Schedule of Meetings for the period 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025 be approved.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.4 CCS/CS/010 CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to approve the following within Customer Services as follows:-

- Updated NIPSO Complaints Handling Procedure
- Customer Services 2024/25 Quarter 1 Update
- Updated Customer Charter

2. NIPSO Complaints Handling Procedure – Compliance Check

Members are reminded that the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure was approved by the Policy and Governance Committee in November 2023, and is based upon the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) published by the Northern Ireland Public Sector Ombudsman (NIPSO) in July 2023.

A formal compliance check of the procedure has been undertaken by NIPSO, and general guidance was provided to all Councils via the Local Government Best Practice Network (LGBPN).

Whilst NIPSO has not directed any specific instructions to Council, the following are requested of all Councils, to ensure consistency:

- Removal of any references to guidance documents not yet published by NIPSO.
- The consistent application of a 30 day period for complainants to request a progression from stage 1 to a stage 2 complaint.
- Alignment of wording with the final published version.
- Removal of examples referring to pensions and use of those relevant to the Council.
- Provide examples of how the Council has gone beyond equality legislation in considering more widely what factors may impact on people's access to complaints handling.

The Council's Complaints Handling Procedure has been updated in line with this guidance and is **enclosed** at Appendix 1, with tracked changes, for approval.

3. Customer Services 2024/25 Quarter 1 Update

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024-25 sets out the performance improvement target; 'we will achieve high levels of customer satisfaction', with four indicators set as measures of success.

The Customer Services 2024/25 Quarter 1 update is enclosed at Appendix 2 for noting. This update also includes the key consultations during 2024/25 and complaints handling from April to June 2024.

4. Customer Charter (Customer Promise)

In 2015, the Council adopted a Customer and Staff Charter. This Charter now requires review due to advancements in technology, updates in Council strategies and procedures, and the changing needs of both customers and staff.

The Customer Charter has also been renamed to the Customer Promise, a copy of which is enclosed at Appendix 3 for approval.

The Customer Promise has been created based on best practice principles from across the UK public sector and will apply to all Council customer activities. Training will ensure that the Promise and its related commitments are integrated into all Council services.

It is a key component of the Customer Experience Strategy, which is currently being developed and will be presented to Elected Members for approval later this year.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the

- (a) updated NIPSO Complaints Handling Procedure at Appendix 1 be approved;**
- (b) Customer Services 2024/25 Quarter 1 Update at Appendix 2 be approved;**
- and**
- (c) updated Customer Promise at Appendix 3 be approved.**

Prepared by: James Porter, Customer Services Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.5 PT/CI/049 2023/24 ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the Annual Self-Assessment Report on Performance (Final Draft) 2023/24.

2. Background

Members are reminded that under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, Section 92(2)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Act requires the Council to publish an assessment of its performance for 2023/24.

3. Self-Assessment on Performance

This report provides an assessment of the Council's performance for 2023/24 in relation to its statutory performance and self-imposed indicators. In line with the legislation, it includes a comparison of performance against previous financial years and where possible, benchmarked against other Councils.

The final draft of the Annual Self-Assessment Report on Performance 2023/24 is enclosed for approval.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Annual Self-Assessment Report on Performance (Final Draft) 2023/24 be approved.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development and Employee Engagement Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.6 PT/CI/060 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25 – PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT, QUARTER 1

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25, Performance Progress Reports, Quarter 1 for Finance and Governance, Organisation Development and overall Council.

2. Background

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.

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 was approved in June 2024. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with 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.

4. Key Points

First Quarter performance progress reports are **enclosed** for Finance and Governance (Appendix 1) and Organisation Development (Appendix 2) and overall Council (Appendix 3) for information.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25, Performance Progress Reports Quarter 1 for Finance and Governance, Organisation Development and overall Council be approved.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development and Employee Engagement Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.7 PT/CI/034 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the revised Performance Improvement Policy.

2. Policy Review

The Performance Improvement Policy 2017 has been revised to reflect departmental Business Plans, the Corporate Strategy 2024-2030 and formatted into the Corporate Policy Framework.

The revised Performance Improvement Policy, with tracked changes, is **enclosed** for approval.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the revised Performance Improvement Policy be approved.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development and Employee Engagement Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.8 PT/CI/060 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATED TIMETABLE 2024/25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to approve the updated Corporate Performance Management Timetable 2024/25.

2. Background

The Performance Management Timetable, which sits within the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25, outlines the Council's performance reporting deadlines and submission dates.

The timetable has been updated to reflect the dates of the 2024 Corporate Workshop.

A copy of the timetable is **enclosed** for approval.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the updated Corporate Performance Management Timetable 2024/25 be approved.

Prepared by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development and Employee Engagement Manager

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the Council's quarterly prompt payment performance.

2. Introduction/Background

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.

3. Prompt Payment Performance

The Council's prompt payment performance for the period **1st April 2024 to 30th June 2024** 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 £17,960,253

The Council paid 5,031 invoices within the 30-day target. (91%)

The Council paid 4,347 invoices within the 10-day target. (79%)

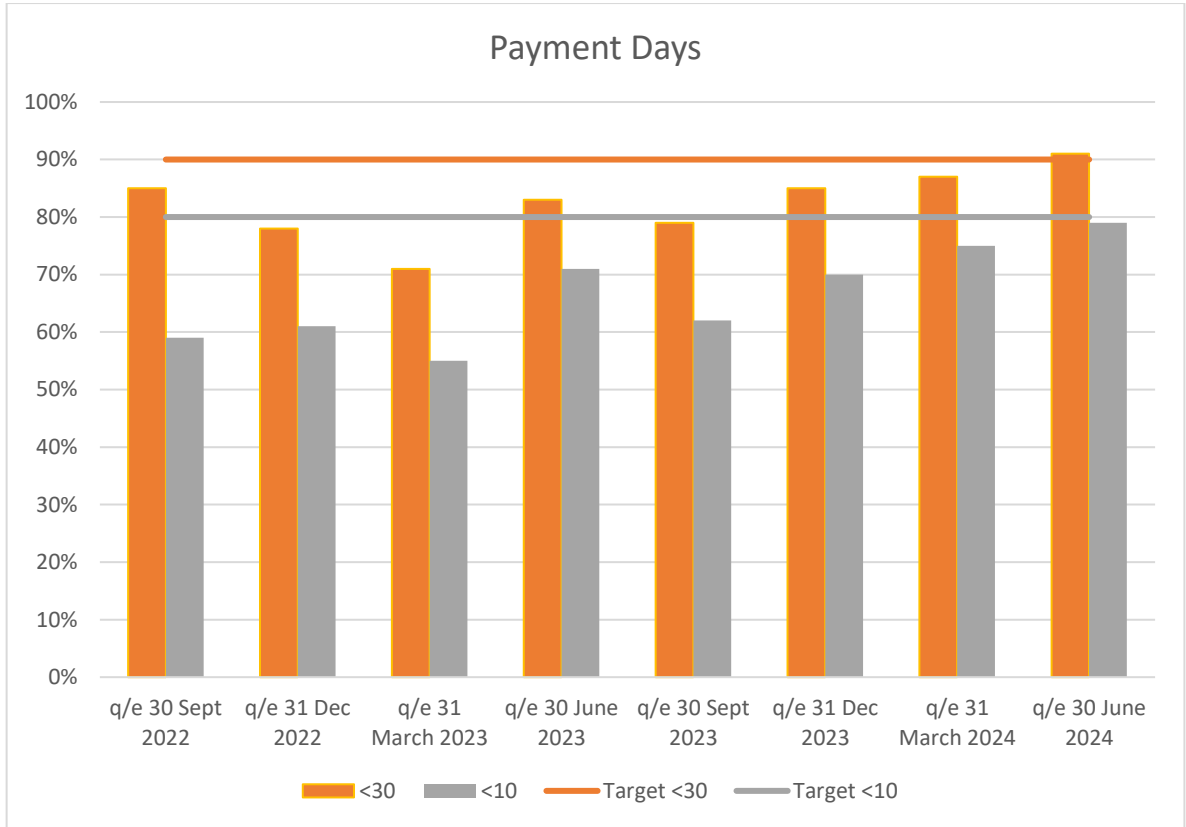
The Council paid 502 invoices outside of the 30-day target. (9%)

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

This compares to previous quarterly results as below:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 30 September 2022	6,090	85%	59%
q/e 31 December 2022	5,780	78%	61%
q/e 31 March 2023	5,558	71%	55%
q/e 30 June 2023	7,050	83%	71%

q/e 30 September 2023	6,498	79%	62%
q/e 31 December 2023	7,074	85%	70%
q/e 31 March 2024	5,776	87%	75%
q/e 30 June 2024	5,533	91%	79%



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

The table and graph above show the performance over the last two years. In comparison with the previous quarter, performance levels have improved for both the 30-day figure and 10-day figure.

The RAG weekly status report shows the improvement in Quarter 1 and into Quarter 2:

Period	No of invoices	% Paid Within 10 Days	11-30Cum	30plus cum	% Paid Within 30 Days
01/04/2024 - 06/04/2024	337	75%	18%	7%	93%
08/04/2024 - 14/04/2024	382	73%	14%	13%	87%
15/04/2024 - 21/04/2024	406	69%	8%	23%	77%
22/04/2024 - 27/04/2024	398	62%	33%	4%	96%
29/04/2024 - 05/05/2024	447	77%	15%	7%	93%
06/05/2024 - 12/05/2024	324	78%	10%	11%	89%
13/05/2024 - 19/05/2024	388	74%	14%	12%	88%
20/05/2024 - 25/05/2024	332	79%	11%	10%	90%
27/05/2024 - 01/06/2024	238	81%	8%	12%	88%
03/06/2024 - 08/06/2024	433	86%	9%	5%	95%
10/06/2024 - 15/06/2024	886	89%	6%	5%	95%
17/06/2024 - 22/06/2024	471	80%	11%	9%	91%
24/06/2024 - 29/06/2024	487	83%	10%	7%	93%
01/07/2024 - 06/07/2024	306	91%	5%	4%	96%

There is now a full complement of staff within the Finance section and work is ongoing with all departments to make further improvements.

Service improvements have included:

- Additional reporting capability to monitor performance
- Staff training/refresher sessions
- Process review for high volume suppliers

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 March 2024 is shown in Appendix 1 enclosed; the Council's performance for Quarter 1 of 2024/25 against the average performance for the other Councils for Quarter 1 of 2024/25 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (Quarter 1 24/25)	91%	79%
All Councils (Quarter 1 24/25)	93%	72%

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council's quarterly prompt payment performance report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Approved by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

5.2 FI/AUD/146 NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE 2024-25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the National Fraud Initiative 2024-25 report.

2. Background

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

3. Key Points

The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for Northern Ireland and 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 2024 to 30 September 2024; and
2. Trade Creditors payment history and standing data – payment history from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2024 and the current Creditor information held at the date of date extract (from 1 October 2024).

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 January 2025.

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 Cabinet Office (responsible for the collection and processing of data on behalf of the C&AG) from 1 October 2024. Finance staff, in conjunction with the Finance software developer, TechnologyOne, are working on the reports to extract the information in the format required.

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 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.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the National Fraud Initiative 2024-25 report be noted.

Prepared by: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.3 G/DPFI/2 QUARTER 1 REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the Quarter 1 statistics relating to FOI/EIR/DPA requests and the publication of summary statistics and associated graphs on the Council website.

2. Introduction/Background

A report has been prepared on requests received in the first quarter of the year (1 April to 30 June 2024) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this is **enclosed**.

Reports on Access to Information requests have been provided to Policy and Governance Committee on a quarterly and annual basis. These reports were based on requests **received** within the stated time period. The ICO have now advised that Public Authorities should publish details on performance on handling requests and that this should also include statistics on requests **completed** within the stated time period.

The summary information and associated graphs will now be published on the Council website following the report being made to Policy and Governance Committee.

3. Summary

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

- The number of requests received was slightly higher than the number in the same period the previous year – an increase of 5%.
- Of the 99 requests received, 68 were under FOI, 29 under EIR and 2 under DPA.
- 117 requests were completed within the quarter.
- 93% of the requests received within the quarter 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 Finance (29), Environmental Health (28), Planning (18) and Governance (12).
- Seven appeals were received during the quarter. In three of these appeals the Council was able to provide further information due to clarification of the request or the passage of time. In the remaining four appeals the Council's original decision was upheld.

- Two complaints to the ICO were notified within the quarter but no further correspondence has been received to date.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note:-

- (a) the Quarter 1 statistics relating to FOI/EIR/DPA requests;**
- (b) the ICO advice on publication of performance on handling requests, to include statistics on requests completed within the quarter; and**
- (c) the publication of summary statistics and associated graphs on the Council website going forward.**

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.4 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 4, APRIL 2024 TO JULY 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the financial performance information at period 4 (April 2024 – July 2024) for Finance & Governance, Organisation Development and Council.

2. Introduction/Background

As agreed, quarterly budget reports will be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group. All financial reports will be available to all Members.

3. Summary

The overall financial position of the Council is presented to the Policy and Governance Committee.

Budget reports for Finance and Governance, Organisational Development, and the Overall Council Financial Performance for Period 4 April 2024 to July 2024 are **enclosed** for Members' information.

At period 4 the Finance & Governance budget is showing a favourable variance of £151k largely attributable to vacant posts and additional grant funding for revenue expenditure.

At period 4 the Organisation Development budget is showing a favourable variance of £3k.

The overall position of the Council at the end of the fourth period is a favourable variance on the net cost of services of £351k.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the financial performance information at period 4 (April 2024 – July 2024) for Finance & Governance, Organisation Development and Council be noted.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

5.5 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE QUARTER 1 APRIL 2024 – JUNE 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the Quarter 1 Managing Attendance Update for the period April 2024 to June 2024 and associated Action Plan for 2024/25.

2. Managing Attendance Update Summary

The Councils 2024/25 annual target for absence is 12 average days lost per employee.

Absence at the end of Quarter 1 2024/25 was above target by 0.54 of a day with 3.61 average days lost per employee against a target of 3.07 days.

A comprehensive action plan is in place to manage absence, with further details provided in the **enclosed** Managing Attendance Performance summary.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Quarter 1 Managing Attendance Update for the period April 2024 to June 2024, and associated Action Plan for 2024/25 be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, HR Systems and Analytics Manager

Agreed by: Pauline Greer, Lead HR Manager (Interim)

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

5.6 G/MSMO/41 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS – DECEMBER 2023 TO MAY 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the summary of Members' attendance for each of the Council and Committee meetings from December 2023 to May 2024, prior to publication on the Council's website.

2. Introduction/Background

Since February 2017 it has become standard practice to publish six-monthly Members' attendance for each Council and Committee meeting on the Council's website.

A summary sheet is **enclosed** showing the total attendance for each of the Council and Committee meetings for the period 1 December 2023 to 31 May 2024.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the summary sheet recording Members' attendance at each of the Council and Committee Meetings for the period from 1 December 2023 to 31 May 2024, for publication on the Council's website, be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance

5.7 CCS/EDP/7 SECTION 75 EQUALITY AND RURAL SCREENING QUARTERLY UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the quarterly update on Section 75 Equality and Rural Screenings for the period February 2024 and June 2024.

2. Background

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 a further equality impact assessment.

3. Section 75 Equality and Rural Screenings

The policies noted below have been screened between February 2024 and June 2024.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy 2023-2027	1
Career Break Policy	1
Marriage/ Civil Partnership Leave Policy	1
Dependants Leave Policy	1
Dignity and Respect at Work Policy	1
Menopause Policy	1
Foster and Kinship Leave Policy	1
Draft Corporate Plan 2024 - 2030	1

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

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the quarterly update on Section 75 Equality and Rural Screenings for the period February 2024 and June 2024 be noted.

Prepared by: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy