



30 December 2020

Committee Chair: Alderman P Brett

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor N Kelly

Committee Members: Aldermen - F Agnew, M Cosgrove and P Michael
Councillors - H Cushinan, S Flanagan, R Foster, P Hamill,
L Irwin, V McAuley, N Ramsay, S Ross, M Stewart and R Wilson

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A remote meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee will be held in The **Chamber, Mossley Mill on Tuesday 5 January 2021 at 6.30pm.**

All Members are requested to attend the meeting via "Zoom".

To ensure social distancing it is only possible to facilitate 11 Members in the Council Chamber. Priority admission will be given to Committee Members on a first come, first served basis. This does not affect the rights of any Member participating in the meeting.

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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memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

A G E N D A

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2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

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3.2 Climate Change Working Group Minutes

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

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4.2 Department for Infrastructure - The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 – Development at Willendale, Ballyclare

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4.9 Launch of Public Consultation on Legislative Options to Inform the Development of an Adult Protection Bill for Northern Ireland

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REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON TUESDAY 5 JANUARY 2021

3. ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 G/BCEP/002 EMERGENCY PLANNING - NEW PANDEMIC PLAN

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires various organisations, including the Council, to prepare for adverse events and incidents.

In March 2020 the Coronavirus Pandemic raised unprecedented impacts across the world, previously not experienced outside third world countries. Under the Leadership of the Chief Executive, the Strategic Response team effectively managed through phases one and two of the pandemic utilising a combination of existing emergency plans, including the Emergency Plan, Flu Plan and Standard Operating Procedure.

Using the recent Council experience of the COVID-19 pandemic a new Pandemic Plan (**enclosed**) has been drafted to replace the Flu Plan. It has strong COVID elements but will be useful for any other type of pandemic such as new strains of Flu, measles, cholera, ebola or any other global infection. The plan has been approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and Equality Screened with guidance from the Accessibility Officer (**copy enclosed**).

RECOMMENDATION: that the new Pandemic Plan be approved.

Prepared by: Elaine Girvan, Corporate Health and Safety Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

3.2 G/BCEP/009 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MINUTES

The minutes of the third Climate Change Working Group, which took place on the 2 December 2020, are enclosed.

In summary, as well as a joint presentation by SIB and the Department for the Economy on the Circular Economy, Members were updated on:

- Vehicle Strategy
- EMS External Audit Outcome
- Officer Climate Change Working Group

Officers are preparing an Action Plan for approval at the next meeting of the Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION: that the minutes of the Climate Change Working Group be approved.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 CE/OA/005 NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (NILGA) DECEMBER 2020 BULLETIN

Members are advised that NILGA has circulated the December 2020 Bulletin and a copy is enclosed for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the NILGA December 2020 Bulletin be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

4.2 G-LEG-325/5 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE - THE PRIVATE STREETS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1980 – DEVELOPMENT AT WILLENDAL, BALLYCLARE

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

RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence be noted.

Prepared by: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

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

4.3 G/MSMO/41 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Members are advised that during the previous term of Council, it was agreed that attendance records for each of the Council and Committee meetings be summarised on a six monthly basis (June-November) and published on the Council's website.

A summary sheet has been prepared showing the total attendance for the period August to November 2020 (reduced to four months due to the previous reporting having been extended to eight months to include the meetings up to and including the Annual Meeting), and, is enclosed for Members' information prior to publication on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDATION: that the summary sheet recording Members' attendance for each of the Council meetings and Committee Member attendance for each of the Committee meetings for the period from August to November 2020 be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.4 FI/FIN/044 FINANCE AND PAYROLL SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT UPDATE

Members will recall that an update was brought to the September Policy and Governance Committee on the implementation of the Finance and Payroll Software Project.

It was agreed that Members would be kept updated on the continued progress and a project update report is now **enclosed** for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.5 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 November 2020 as compared to November 2019. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (see **enclosed** Appendix 1).

Appendix 2 (**enclosed**) sets out expenditure on agency workers in November 2020.

The cost of agency staff has decreased for the period of 1 April 2020 to 30 November 2020 at 4.28% of all staffing costs compared to 7.13% for the same period last year. Agency expenditure has significantly reduced following the release of agency workers in May 2020.

Members requested clarification on parity of pay and annual leave for agency workers. All agency workers receive the same pay and basic annual leave entitlement as a council employee, from the commencement of their assignment with the Council.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Victoria Stewart, Human Resources Administrator

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, Human Resources Manager

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

4.6 HR/ER/003 ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2016/2020 - HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members are reminded that our Engagement and Wellbeing Strategy initiatives were tailored to ensure that we establish workplace interventions to support the mental health of our staff, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Wellbeing workplace interventions that have been delivered to date.

Workplace Interventions

Training was delivered to help support staff in areas such as Emotional Resilience, Motivating & Leading Remote Teams. Mental Health First Aid training was also delivered for staff and Elected Members.

During Covid-19, especially during lockdown, staff and Members were supported to look after their mental and physical health with a number of e-zines and programmes signposting to organisations that offer support. Some self-help options were also developed such as the Stress Control, Mindfulness and Work/Life balance sessions all delivered via the Northern Trust. Covid-19 Wellbeing, Lifeline and Samaritans information was, and will continue to be, shared and promoted.

To maintain Healthy Lifestyles, 'Men's Health Week' was promoted which explored how the health of men has been impacted by COVID and offered practical ways to help.

Flu clinics were also held with a total of 90 availing of the free vaccine.

To further raise awareness relating to Mental Health, a week of activities was delivered to mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2020. We introduced our 29 trained Mental Health Champions (2 shared their personal stories, received well across the organisation), and many Managers also took part in our Tea 'n' Talk sessions with their teams.

Positively, following Mental Health week, a further 16 staff and 2 Councillors successfully completed Mental Health First Aid training and join our current team which now stands at 36.

At a regional level, the Local Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy was launched in October and the Council continues to participate in the working group.

Next Steps

Due to the success of our Mental Health Champion network, we will continue to raise awareness of Mental Health issues through that successful team.

To lend support relating to financial matters, the Money Advice and Pension Service (MaPS) website will be further promoted to assist with advice related to topics such as debt, pensions, mortgages, budgeting etc.

Also planned are some 'Lunch and Learn' information sessions for staff on a range of subjects, along with further promotions for 'Mindfulness' and 'Resilience' training to support staff after a stressful year. The Action Cancer Bus and Keep Well Van visits are programmed to take place in spring.

The full range of key initiatives are noted within the **enclosed** Programme, for Members information.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Fiona Gunning, Organisation Development Officer

Agreed by: Jennifer Close, HR Manager

Approved by: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

4.7 G/IG/008 ICO DATA SHARING CODE

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) submitted its Data Sharing Code to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on 17 December 2020.

The code provides practical advice to businesses and organisations on how to carry out responsible data sharing. Additional information and resources will be available on the ICO website. The Information Commissioner has stated that she does not see the publication or laying of the Code as a conclusion, but as a milestone on the continuing work that the ICO and other stakeholders are doing to enable individuals and organisations to data share with confidence.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Helen McBride, Information Governance Manager

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director Finance, Governance & Performance

4.8 FI/FIN/045 DETAILS ON RATE SETTING PROCESS 2021/22 AND RELATED GENERAL ESTIMATES OF RATES FORM AND IMPACT OF COVID ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Members are advised that correspondence (enclosed) has been received from the Department for Communities in relation to the Rates Setting Process for 2021/22.

Under the Local Government Finance Act Northern Ireland 2011, District Councils are obliged to set the estimates of rates before 15 February each year. District councils are also obliged under the Rates Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 to set district rates no later than this date.

Due to the current COVID-19 emergency situation **the rate setting date will be changed to 1 March** for the 2021/22 financial year. Formal confirmation of this will follow once the necessary regulation amendments are made.

Members are also advised that a report (enclosed) has also been sent to Department for Communities and Department of Finance from SOLACE highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on Local Government finances and requesting central government support. This report has been endorsed by NILGA.

It is clear that COVID-19 has presented unprecedented financial challenges for Local Government finances and services in Northern Ireland.

Significant Central Government support has been committed to compensate Councils for this in the Current financial year.

Many of these financial pressures will continue beyond March 2021, presenting significant challenges for Councils when striking their rates for 2021/22.

The report presents an analysis of Local Government finances together with the financial challenges and associated assumptions currently informing Council rates positions across Northern Ireland as each Council works towards striking an affordable rate for 21/22.

The continued uncertainty makes estimating financial impacts challenging; however best case and worse case scenarios have been presented in this report. The support requested from Government is set out in section 7 of the report.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Denise Lynn, PA to Director of Finance and Governance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.9 CCS/GEN/009 LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON LEGISLATIVE OPTIONS TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADULT PROTECTION BILL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Members are advised that the Department of Health is undertaking a public consultation on legislative options to inform the development of an Adult Protection Bill for Northern Ireland.

Members are advised that further details can be found via the NI Direct consultation link <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doh-1/legislative-options-for-adult-protection>

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Denise Lynn, PA to Director of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance