



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY 23 February 2021

No	Item	Summary of Key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	<i>Nil</i>
2.	Declarations of Interest	<i>Alderman Duddy, S McKillop, Baird Councillors McGurk, Dallat O'Driscoll, Knight McQuillan</i>
3.	Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 26 January 2021	<i>Confirm</i>
4.	NI100 – Centenary Celebrations – Visit to The Somme to mark the 100 th Anniversary of The Ulster Tower.	<i>To recommend that the event be attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, outgoing Mayor and Veterans' Champion. If one or more members travelling were unable to attend that the names of those who wished</i>

		<i>to attend would be placed in a hat with an Officer drawing out a name or names.</i>
5.	Prompt Payment Statistics	Note
6.	Elected Member Development Working Group	To recommend that the notes of the meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on 22 February 21 at 7 pm Via MS Teams are approved.
7.	Conferences	Nil
8.	Correspondence	Note
9.	Consultation	Note
10.	Matters for Reporting to the Partnership Panel	Nil
11.	<p>Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Peacock, Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin (referred from 2 February 2021 Council Meeting)</p> <p><i>“That this Council continue to record proceedings of the Council and Committee meetings when the meeting goes into</i></p>	Support amended Notice of Motion

	<p><i>committee. These recordings should not be publicly available but held by Council for future reference. Many times we have required clarification from a meeting which had gone into committee and not had the information available and many times we have seen call-ins come back to say that the audio was not available and so limited consideration could be given or information on a members or officers contributions cannot be sought as the audio recording has stopped. In order to ensure good governance and ease of reference audio recording should continue, in a manner most suitable, to be held privately by the Council as a record of the meeting.</i></p>	
	In Committee (Items 12-13 inclusive)	
12	Debt Management	Note
13.	Minutes of Land and Property Sub-Committee Meeting held Wednesday 3 February 2021	
	13.1 Market Yard (Item 5)	<i>To recommend that a report be brought to the Land and Property Sub-Committee outlining strategic use and failing that is considered for disposal.</i>
	13.2 Killyrammer Disposal Update to CP&R Committee	<i>To recommend Option 1 - The council outline timelines that would be acceptable, and</i>

		<p>afford Triangle Housing opportunity to agree to meet those deadlines. If no agreement, then asset owner may move the asset to the external market and Triangle Housing may pursue the acquisition on the open market.</p> <p>To further recommend that the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee held on 3 February 2021 and recommendations therein are approved, excluding item 5 and 10.1 and including recommendation at 13.1 and 13.2 above.</p>
14.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (o))	
	<p>14 (i) Can a report be brought to Corporate Policy and Resources March meeting, and subsequently quarterly thereafter, listing all Notice of Motions that have been submitted to this Council to date and detailing which remain live or have been resolved?" (Councillor Knight-McQuillan)</p>	<p>To recommend that a report be brought to April Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting with Performance KPI</p>

		<i>to manage officers' actions in relation to live Notice of Motions.</i>
	14 (ii) "What support is being given to staff, primarily but not exclusively working mothers, currently working from home whilst also having to manage home schooling alongside their employment duties?" (Councillor Knight-McQuillan	<i>Information</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS,
AND VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCE ON
TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY AT 7.00 PM**

In the Chair: Alderman Hillis (C)

Present: Alderman: Baird (R); Fielding (C); Sharon McKillop (R); Duddy (C); McCorkell (R)
Councillors: Beattie (R); Chivers (R); Dallat O'Driscoll (R); Knight-McQuillan (R); McCaw (R); McGurk (R); McLean (C); Wilson (R); C McShane (R); McGlinchey (R)

Members in

Attendance: Councillor Peacock (R), Councillor Holmes (R)

Officers Present: M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
P Donaghy, Democratic & Central Services Manager (R)
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer (R)
J Richardson, Head of Capital Works, Energy & Infrastructure (R)
A Ruddy, Audit, Risk and Governance Officer (R)
J Mills, Land and Property Solicitor (R)
I Owens, Committee and Member Services Officer (C)

In Attendance: A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer (C)
Chris Ballentine, ICT Officer (C)

Press (4 No.) (R) Public (0 No.)

Key: (C) Attended in the Chamber (R) Attended Remotely

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were recorded for:-

Alderman Duddy, S McKillop and Baird; Councillor McGurk, Dallat O'Driscoll in Item 13 – Land and Property Sub-Committee Meeting minutes 3 February 2021, did not participate in this item as members of the Planning Committee.

Alderman S McKillop and Councillor Knight-McQuillan in Item 6. The members did not participate in the item as participants in the NILGA ILM programme.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2021

The Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. NI100 – CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS – VISIT TO THE SOMME TO MARK THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ULSTER TOWER

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

Council's NI100 Working Group was established in July 2020 to devise a year long programme of events during 2021 to mark the Northern Ireland centenary. November 2021 also marks the centenary of the opening of the Ulster Tower Memorial on the Somme battlefields. It is proposed that Council is represented at the memorial commemorating the service and sacrifice of men from the island of Ireland at the Somme and the wider First World War.

Leger Holidays in association with The Somme Association is offering the 'Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Tower' fully escorted tour as follows:

Date	Thurs 18 th Nov - Sun 21 st Nov
Flights	Belfast – London (flight details unavailable at present)
Accommodation	3 nights in hotel with continental breakfast (min 3-star & located within 60 miles of Ulster Tower Memorial)
Cost	£549 pp sharing/£698 single

The proposed itinerary for the trip is was previously circulated to members.

Recommendation

Members will recall that at Corporate Resources & Policy Committee in October it was agreed to provisionally express an interest in the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Council's Veterans' Champion attending the tour. It is recommended that the Committee make recommendation to Council on who should attend the trip so that places can be reserved.

Alderman Duddy suggested that given the significance of the Ulster Tower and the celebration of the Northern Ireland Centenary that this event should be attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and the Veterans Champion.

Councillor Wilson felt that if those travelling were unable at the time to attend that the names of those who wished to attend would be placed in a hat with an Officer drawing out a name or names.

Alderman McCorkell further suggested that the outgoing Mayor also be included.

Councillor C McShane felt it was not prudent given the current restrictions and the economic situation to be agreeing to send elected members on a trip but felt that members had the right to honour their dead.

Councillor Wilson said that the proposal was on the basis that restrictions would be adhered to.

Alderman Duddy said that members attending would be compliant with restrictions but felt that given the significant sacrifice made by those in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom to ensure our freedom it was fitting to attend.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Councillor Wilson

To recommend that the event be attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, outgoing Mayor and Veterans' Champion. If one or more members travelling were unable to attend that the names of those who wished to attend would be placed in a hat with an Officer drawing out a name or names.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote
10 Members voted For; 6 Members voted Against, 0 Members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

5. PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Background

Department for communities (DfC) requires Council to record and publish statistics regarding the payment of supplier invoices with specific reference to two distinct measures namely invoices paid within 10 working days and invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

Detail

These figures are published on a quarterly basis by DfC with Councils required to do likewise. The purpose of the statistics is to encourage Councils

to support businesses especially those local and/or small businesses for whom cash flow is of vital importance to their continued survival. In addition as part of Council's performance improvement plan for this year the payment of our suppliers has been identified as one of the performance improvement objectives with a target of 90% of suppliers being paid within 30 calendar days. The tables below detail Council's performance since April 2017 the latest data being for month 10 of 20/21 year being up to and including end of January 2021. Month 10 performance has dipped from the previous quarter with 57.16% of invoices paid within 10 working days, this is due to the Christmas holidays were many staff were on leave and therefore approvals not made until they returned and there was a significant gap between the last payment run in December and the first in January. The 30 day figure remains relatively steady at 80.49%. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Council are currently processing a significantly lower number of invoices. Many staff are working from home, we have introduced where possible email approval for those invoices that don't require a purchase order, which has improved turnaround times. The Accounts Payable team have changed some of their working practices and staff have been allocated specific suppliers to look after and therefore when supplier invoices are out for approval for more than 10 days the staff member responsible is chasing the budget holder to approve these.

Improvement Actions

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic Council had introduced electronic purchase order processing (POPs) in January 2020, staff were trained and this was working well. For staff to access the system they need access to the Council network which means entering council buildings or having vpn access. Most staff required to raise or approve purchase orders now have access to vpn and therefore now have the capability to do so whilst working from home, this should improve the workflow and improve our prompt payment statistics further.

Prompt Payment Statistics were provided for the periods 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 Quarters 1 – 4 and for 2020/21 Quarters 1 – 3 as Quarter 4 not yet complete.

Alderman Duddy asked if Community Grants payments were included in these statistics and referred to an apparent delay in the processing of grant payments of up to 3 months. The Chief Finance Officer said that payments for grants raised via an invoice may be included in these statistics but agreed to investigate and report back to committee.

In terms of the timeline Alderman Duddy asked when the calculation of time commenced in terms of monitoring processing of payments and the Chief Finance Officer explained that the clock started ticking on receipt, however he

could not legislate for the process in advance of the request for payment reaching Accounts Payable. Councillor Knight-McQuillan concurred with these remarks. The Chief Finance Officer agreed to provide members with an update regarding the timeline for processing of grant payments.

Alderman Baird concurred with these remarks and asked the Chief Finance Officer to look into the high number of disputed invoices and the time taken to resolve. The Chief Finance Officer agreed to bring this information back to the committee.

At the request of Alderman McCorkell the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the majority of staff working in payroll, accounts payable and accounts received were able to work from home, calling at the office when necessary. Alderman McCorkell praised the work of staff in this section suggesting that the figures for 2020/21 were improved on previous figures.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report.

6. ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The Director of Corporate Services referred members to the notes of the meeting held on Monday 22 February 2021 at 7pm Via MS Teams which were recommended for approval.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Alderman Fielding

To recommend that the notes of the meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on 22 February 21 at 7 pm Via MS Teams are approved.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to Vote
14 Members Voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

7. CONFERENCES

There were no conferences.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present correspondence for Members consideration.

The following correspondence has been received:

8.1 Local Government Boundaries Review in Northern Ireland – dated 3 February 2021 – Sarah Havlin, Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

Correspondence, previously circulated inviting proposals in relation to the boundary and name of the 11 districts: and the number, boundaries and names of the wards within the 11 districts.

The Director of Corporate Services indicated that initial views would be welcomed at the beginning of April unless members were minded to provide a Corporate response. The Director further advised that the public consultation would commence on 21 June 2021.

If you would like to submit a proposal or discuss any aspect of this please contact info@lgbc-ni.org.uk

More information about the Review will be accessed through the website available at:- www.lgbc-ni.org.uk

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee considers the contents of the correspondence item.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the correspondence report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present consultations for Members consideration.

The following consultation has been received:

9.1 Department of Finance – 2021-22 Draft Budget Allocations to the Assembly

The Minister of Finance announced the 2021-22 Draft Budget Allocations to the Assembly on 18 Executives proposed spending plans for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Previously circulated was link to the Department of Finance 2021-22 Draft Budget documents. One is a commentary on the Draft Budget Outcome and the second is the Equality Screening document budget position.

The Director of Corporate Services reminded members that the deadline for submission was 25 February 2021.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee considers the contents of the consultation item.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the consultation report.

10. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR PEACOCK, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MCLAUGHLIN (REFERRED FROM 2 FEBRUARY 2021 COUNCIL MEETING)

“That this Council continue to record proceedings of the Council when the Council goes into committee. These recordings should not be publicly available but held by Council for future reference. Many times we have required clarification from a meeting which had gone into committee and not had the information available and many times we have seen call-ins come back to say that the audio was not available and so limited consideration could be given or information on a members or officers contributions cannot be sought as the audio recording has stopped. In order to ensure good governance and ease of reference audio recording should continue, in a manner most suitable, to be held privately by the Council as a record of the meeting.”

Councillor Peacock confirmed her support of the Notice of Motion and in the absence of Councillor McLaughlin, Councillor C McShane also confirmed her support of the Notice of Motion.

Members broadly welcomed the Notice of Motion but voiced concerns about possible leaks, the manner in which sensitive information would be stored and the need for a separate recording for ‘in committee’ business.

Councillor Knight-McQuillan suggested that the Notice of Motion be amended to include all committee meetings but not the Planning committee. Councillor Peacock (proposer) and Councillor McShane (seconder in the absence of Councillor McLaughlin) confirmed they were in agreement.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that technically two recordings could be enabled. The Director agreed to bring a report to the committee and would explore best practice in storing 'in committee' recording as well as access legislation and governance around requests.

The Chair invited the Proposer, Councillor Peacock the opportunity to summarise and she agreed with previous speakers confirming that all committees should be recorded in full.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote
16 Members voted For; 0 voted Against; 0 Member Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

***Alderman S McKillop left the meeting at 8.07 pm.**

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor McLean

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move *'In Committee'*.

*** Members of the Press / Public left the meeting at 8.10 pm**

*** The information contained in the following items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

12. DEBT MANAGEMENT

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by The Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

This report informs members of the current position surrounding debt owed to the Council by its customers.

Background

Council implemented a revised Debt Management Policy in February 2017.

Detail – Aged Debt Analysis

Tables previously circulated included debt over 90 days as at 31 January 2020, 31 January 2021 and comparisons. Also included was a table showing debt over 90 days which have now been cleared and the current status of debt over 90 days which remains outstanding.

Options

Debt write-off under £1,000 - In accordance with our debt management policy the Officer reported to Council any debts under £1,000 which the Chief Finance Officer has the authority to write-off. There are no such debts this month.

Debt Write-off over £1,000 - In accordance with our debt management policy, Council approval is sought in order to write off any debts in excess of £1,000. There are no such debts this month.

Alderman Duddy referred to a number of outstanding debts for community centre and pitch hire and caravans and asked the timeline regarding the issue of first bill to final demand and potentially small claims. The Chief Finance Officer agreed to provide this information.

At the request of Alderman Duddy the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that Direct Debit was offered and that many had signed up to this.

The Chief Finance Officer also agreed to look into the timescale of a historic debt for ground maintenance at the request of Alderman Duddy.

It was **AGREED** to note the contents of the report.

13. MINUTES OF LAND AND PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2021

Confidential minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 February 2021 were presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

13.1 Market Yard (Item 5)

Alderman Duddy said that in the absence of clarity regarding 'strategic use' of this asset instead of holding on the basis of 'expression of interest' it should be disposed of as has been redundant since before the inception of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy

Seconded by Alderman McCorkell

To recommend that a report be brought to the Land and Property Sub-Committee outlining strategic use and failing that is considered for disposal.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote
15 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion carried.

13.2 Killyrammer Disposal Update (Item 10.1)

The Director advised that the content of the report within Item 13.2 - Killyrammer Disposal Update to CP&R Committee - invalidates the recommendation to Council within Land & Property Sub-Committee Minute Item 10.1 – Killyrammer Community Centre – Asset Disposal – Next Steps. The Land and Property Sub-Committee recommendation was:

AGREED to recommend that Council permits Triangle Housing Association (the Association) to continue with its due diligence on the condition that Council is not bound to sell to the Association while also placing Killyrammer Community Centre on the external market using the Central Advisory Unit's commercial agent.

For members clarity the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the above recommendation was followed by an update regarding Triangle Housing below:-

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with additional information on the disposal of Killyrammer Community Centre following the Land and Property Sub-Committee's recommendation at its meeting held on 3rd February 2021.

Background

Council agreed in January 2018 in respect of Killyrammer Community Centre not to proceed to Outline Business Case stage and proceed with Option Four: Close Killyrammer Community Centre and ensure users are accommodated in other halls and dispose of the asset as detailed in the report to the Leisure and Development Committee in June 2017. In May 2018 Council agreed that the following work progress in respect of this property and that a report is brought back to Sub Committee with the results of the D1 – Public Sector Clearing House procedure once it has been completed;

- Completion of all technical and legal due diligence and compilation of the Title Pack.
- Identification of any initiatives which may add value prior to disposal.

- Obtain a Market Valuation for each property
- In accordance with Department of Finance guidance, liaise with Land and Property Services and initiate the D1 – Public Sector Clearing House procedure.

Council granted approval to the Capital Works Department to submit a Full Statutory Planning Application in respect of Option 3, which provides an 'added-value' of £40, 000.00, (excl. VAT), and progress through the D1 Public Sector Clearing House Procedure and Open Market thereafter, in order to maximise revenue from the sale of the site.

D1 Public Sector Disposal

Killyrammer Community Centre was advertised under D1, internal market circulation for a period of 15 days, ending on 28th February 2020. Following completion of the D1 process the only interested party through the internal market (public sector) was Triangle Housing Association. Council's previous decision includes progress to the Open Market following completion of the D1 process. However, Triangle Housing Association has requested to continue with their due diligence in the interim.

Council has to make a decision as to how it wishes to proceed in light of the request from Triangle Housing Association.

Land and Property Sub-Committee 3rd February 2021

At its meeting held on 3rd February 2021 the Land and Property Sub-Committee made recommendation to the Corporate Policy and Resources Sub-Committee as follows and as contained in the minutes of the Sub-Committee presented to Committee:

It is recommended that Council permits Triangle Housing Association (the Association) to continue with its due diligence on the condition that Council is not bound to sell to the Association while also placing Killyrammer Community Centre on the external market using the Central Advisory Unit's commercial agent.

Additional Information

Since the Sub-Committee's meeting it has been advised that the Central Advisory Unit (CAU) would not recommend that approach as recommended by the Sub-Committee.

Usually before going to the open market, a decision shall be made by the asset owner that the timelines outlined by the interested party with regards their key milestones are not accepted and the asset owner would then abandon the internal market process.

CAU would suggest, either;

- The Council outlines timelines that would be acceptable, and afford Triangle Housing opportunity to agree to meet those deadlines. If no agreement, then Council move the asset to the external market and Triangle Housing may pursue the acquisition on the open market.
- OR Triangle Housing is informed that Council does not wish to pursue their interest based on information already submitted.

Triangle have provided key milestones.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council proceeds to agree Option 1 or Option 2

- Option 1 - The council outline timelines that would be acceptable, and afford Triangle Housing opportunity to agree to meet those deadlines. If no agreement, then asset owner may move the asset to the external market and Triangle Housing may pursue the acquisition on the open market.
- Option 2 – The Council informs Triangle Housing that Council does not wish to pursue their interest based on information already submitted and as outlined in the timescales provided.

Alderman Baird ask for details of the process undertook to reach these options. The Land and Property Solicitor confirmed that Killyrammer Community Centre was advertised under D1, internal market circulation for a period of 15 days, ending on 28th February 2020. Following completion of the D1 process the only interested party through the internal market (public sector) was Triangle Housing Association.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor McQuillan

To recommend Option 1 - The council outline timelines that would be acceptable, and afford Triangle Housing opportunity to agree to meet those deadlines. If no agreement, then asset owner may move the asset to the external market and Triangle Housing may pursue the acquisition on the open market.

To further recommend that the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee held on 3 February 2021 and recommendations therein are

approved, excluding the recommendations at items 5 and 10.1 and including the recommendations at 13.1 and 13.2 above.

The Chair put the motions to the Committee to vote
11 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against, 0 Members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motions Carried.

14. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS (NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 12 (o))

In accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Knight-McQuillan submitted the following Item:-

- 14.1** *“Can a report be brought to Corporate Policy and Resources March meeting, and subsequently quarterly thereafter, listing all Notice of Motions that have been submitted to this Council to date and detailing which remain live or have been resolved?”*

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Notice of Motions register was now featured on the members portal and would be regularly updated and referred to the fact that the document was A3 in size and included nearly 180 Notice of Motions.

Councillor Knight-McQuillan felt that including these in the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee would enable discussion around delays. Councillor McGurk voiced concerns that not all motions are followed through to completion once allocated to Officers and suggested that the Performance team track these using KPI's but that accountability for delay should be reported via Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to bring a report to the April Corporate Policy and Resources Committee outlining live issues per directorate as a starting point.

All members present were in agreement.

Councillor Wilson referred to the high number of Notice of Motions brought to Council and acknowledged the democratic right of elected members to present them. Councillor Wilson said he was mindful of the divisiveness nature of some of them and the workload for staff administering them.

Alderman Duddy concurred with Councillor Wilson's comments questioning the wisdom of bringing matters to Council which sat with Stormont and

referred to the Partnership Panel which is a forum for lobbying central government.

Alderman Duddy felt that the use of KPI's to manage Notice of Motion actions was useful.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Wilson

To recommend that a report be brought to April Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting with Performance KPI to manage officers actions in relation to live Notice of Motions.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote
14 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion carried.

14.2 *“What support is being given to staff, primarily but not exclusively working mothers, currently working from home whilst also having to manage home schooling alongside their employment duties?”*

The Director said that staff had proved to be resilient during what has been unprecedented times which no-one could have envisaged and referred to various approaches.

Flexible working arrangements include starting earlier; extended lunch; parental leave; statutory parental leave; special leave; use of annual leave/flexi leave/time off in lieu.

Communication channels include Microsoft Teams, staff newsletter, use of VPN equipment, and comments from staff were welcome in relation to circumstances arising whilst working from home.

The Director said that Supervisors were training lone workers how to effectively manage workloads whilst working from home and pointed to ongoing emotional and practical support which is available to all staff, including 'Inspire' and 'Northern Health Trust'.

The Director suggested that if staff were taking an extended lunch break they should advise their line manager so not to be disturbed and said that staff should be encouraged to get a break from work.

The Director said that there had been a reduction in absenteeism, many front line services were continuing and looking to the next few months staff returning to work would be facilitated in line with social distancing guidance.

Councillor Knight –McQuillan thanked the Director for an update on the good level of support provided to staff and praised the efficiency of staff who often dealt with enquiries outside of normal working hours. Councillor Knight-McQuillan felt that there could be light-hearted lunchtime communication open to all departments to enhance good relations given the lack of face to face contact and finally thanked all those working from home who were facing the problems associated with the pandemic.

Alderman Duddy concurred with the comments made by Councilor Knight-McQuillan expressing sympathy to those trying to undertake work alongside home schooling.

Alderman Baird welcomed the flexible approach adopted by Council in relation to staff working from home and recognised the issues faced by parents and also welcomed the reduction in absenteeism figures.

Alderman McCorkell said that the result of showing flexibility and support to staff at this time would result in staff loyalty.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Alderman Fielding

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move *'In Public'*.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 9.40 pm

Chair