

**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2021**

No	Item	Summary of Key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	Councillors Chivers, C McShane
2.	Declarations of Interest	Alderman Baird
3.	Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 26 October 2021	Confirmed
4.	2021/22 Performance Improvement Objectives 6-month update	Information
5.	Corporate Services Business Plans – Month 6 Review	Information
5.1	Democratic and Central Services	
5.2	ICT	
5.3	ODHR	
5.4	Performance	
5.5	Policy and Community Planning	
6.	Corporate Policies	Information
(i)	Draft Communication Strategy	
(ii)	Draft Gifts & Hospitality Policy	
7.	Conferences	Information
8.	Correspondence	Nil
9.	Consultations	Information
9.1	Update from NIPSO on Public Consultation and NILGA Emergency Climate Training Complaints Handling	
9.2	Addendum - Consultation on extending the provisions within Schedule 27 of the Coronavirus Act 2020	
10.	Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel	Nil
	'In Committee' (Items 11 - 15 inclusive)	

11.	Land and Property Sub Committee 3 November 2021	
11.1	Requests to Use Council Land Ref No 74/21 85/21	<i>to recommend that Council defer decision regarding the installation of the memorial until such time a presentation from the Coast and Countryside Officers is received regarding the Environmental Improvement Scheme and that Council approve the use of the land for the cultural event.</i>
11.2	Request to Use Council Land Ref 106/21 Use of Main Street Carpark, Limavady	<i>To defer making a decision until the next Full Council meeting and a more detailed report brought detailing the implications surrounding planning, insurance considerations, health and safety aspects, comparison to the previous report and the movement of heavy vehicles in the car park.</i>
	Matters Arising	
11.3	Ref 87/20 – Portstewart, The Crescent – Repainting of Biblical Script (Item 5.1)	<i>Amendment To recommend that Council gives permission to re-paint the text and does not carry out equality screening and that Council gives permission for the individual to renew the text as and when required and that the individual write to Council to advise the Council that repainting is being completed.</i>
11.4	Adoption of the Minutes	<i>Approve and recommendations therein including recommendations at 11.1 and 11.3 above</i>

12.	Provision of Employment of Agency Services	<i>That the decision be deferred to Full Council for more detail regarding costs.</i>
13.	Populating the Organisation Structure	<i>Information</i>
14.	Corporate Services Management Accounts	<i>Information</i>
15.	Corporate Services Estimates 2022/23	<i>Information</i>
16.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12(o))	<i>Nil</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 NOVEMBER AT 7.00 PM**

In the Chair: Alderman Knight McQuillan (C)

Present: Alderman Baird (R); Duddy (C); Finlay (C); Fielding (C); Hillis (C); S McKillop (C), Councillors Beattie (R); Dallat O'Driscoll (R); McCaw (R); McGurk (R); McLean (C); Wilson (C)

Officers Present: M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
P Donaghy, Democratic and Central Services Manager (R)
S McMaw, Head of Performance (R)
J McCarron, Performance Officer (R)
K Mailey, Acting Head of Organisational Development & Human Resources (R)
J Richardson, Head of Capital Works, Energy and Infrastructure (R)
J Keen, Committee and Member Services Officer (C)

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

Press (2 No.) (R)

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

The Director of Corporate Services undertook a roll call of committee members present.

The Chair advised Committee of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded; and with the remote meetings protocol.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Councillor Chivers and Councillor C McShane.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Alderman Baird declared an interest in Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 3 November 2021, Minute Item 5.1 Ref 87/20 – Portstewart, The Crescent – Repainting of Biblical Script. Alderman Baird withdrew from participation during consideration and did not vote on the Item.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2021

Summary, previously circulated.

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

4. 2021/22 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 6-MONTH UPDATE

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Performance Officer.

The purpose of this report is to present to Elected Members for information a mid year update on performance against the Council's 2021/22 Performance Improvement Objectives.

Background

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Part 12, sets out the key responsibilities that each Council has in relation to the Performance Duty. One of these key responsibilities is to publish and then report against a set of annual Performance Improvement Objectives.

The 2021/22 Performance Improvement Objectives were set as part of the 2021/22 Performance Improvement Plan that was agreed by Council in June 2021 and a mid year update on their progress is included below.

Conclusion

Members are asked to note this update and to seek any further clarity of required.

2021/22 Performance Improvement Objective 1

We will lower staff absenteeism rates

Senior Responsible Officer

Director of Corporate Services

Why has this objective been chosen?

Successful delivery of Council services is reliant on our staff who are our most important asset. A full staffing compliment with improved attendance rates will increase the Council's ability to deliver services and implement its arrangement for improving performance and achieving Financial savings. The health and well-being of our staff/workforce, is of the utmost importance to us. Ensuring high performance is inextricably linked to the well-being of our staff. An audit in this context is required to measure our strategic effectiveness and service quality.

During 2020/21 the quarterly reporting of the Council's Absenteeism Dashboard has demonstrated that long term sickness and the average days lost per employee across the Council are improving.

Whilst improvements have been made in 2020/21, the senior Council Officers still see absenteeism as an important issue for them and would like to see continued improvements going forward.

As 2020/21 has not been a usual year due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the sickness figures from the previous year (2019/20 actuals) will be used as a baseline to report against.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2021/22)

- Work with stakeholders to identify and agree further measures to support employees such as access to private Health Care, access to specific treatments, health insurance etc by December 2021.
- Identify and implement improvements with the Occupational Health Provider to improve the service provided to employees.
- We will oversee an improved focus on the health and wellbeing of our staff by offering more education and opportunities for mental and physical activity. This will include a new programme of regional activities and education including for example Mental Health Week, walking challenges
More focus on Mental Health activities and education

Outcomes (The measurable differences made)

- A 2.75% reduction in the number of days lost to Council through long term sickness (**9,382.64 days in 2019/20**, and 6,128.20 days in 2020/21)
- A 2.5% reduction in the average number of days lost per employee through sickness absenteeism (**17.66 days per employee in 2019/20**, and 11.41 in 2020/21)
- 150 staff members will take part in the Council's mental and physical wellbeing activities and events

Outputs and Outcomes - Update for April-September 2021

	12 months ending 30/09/19	Reduction target against same period last year	12 months ending 30/09/21	On Target/ Not On Target
Average number of days lost per employee through sickness absenteeism	7.97	7.77 (2.75% target)	7.38 (7.38% reduction)	On Target
Number of Days lost to Council through long term sickness	4,447.25	4,324.95 (2.5% target)	654.09 (14.71% reduction)	On Target
Average time for an Occupational Health Review (We will maintain the average time for an Occupational health Review from 4 weeks to 2)	4 weeks	2 weeks (from 4 weeks to 2 weeks)	2 weeks	On Target
150 Staff members engaging in Council's wellbeing activities			470*	Achieved

*93 participants involved in the Councils Walking Challenges / a further 6 employees have joined the Councils Gyms / 371 staff completed Online Mental Health Courses

2021/22 Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will improve and drive inclusive economic growth across the Borough through the Growth Deal

Senior Responsible Officer

Director Leisure and Development

Why has this objective been chosen?

The Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal is regarded by Council as one of the most important and tangible drivers for delivering improvements across the Borough.

Growth Deals are models of economic growth which provide regions with the opportunity to:

- Take charge and responsibility of decisions that affect their area.
- Do what they think is best to help businesses grow.
- Identify priorities for economic growth in the region.
- Decide how funding should be spent to meet those priorities.

Council has committed to a Growth Deal to deliver upon each of the key priorities identified above. Specifically, our Growth Deal will help grow our local economy over the next 5-10 years across six key themes/sectors i.e. Innovation; Tourism and Regeneration; Infrastructure; Employability and Skills; Digital Connectivity; and Energy/ Green Economy.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2021/22)

- Agree and prioritise shortlist of Growth Deal projects to be carried forward for further assessment.
- Strategic Outline Cases developed and signed-off by lead NI Department.
- Confirm strong local / private sector partnership and investment.
- Funding and Governance arrangements agreed.
- Signing of the Heads of Terms.

Outputs – Update for April-September 2021

- Council agreed Growth Deal key themes and projects.
- Council agreed Governance Framework and roles and responsibilities.
- Council establish Growth Deal Programme Management Office.
- Funding applications submitted to alternative funding sources to support Growth Deal Projects i.e. Levelling Up Fund; Complementary Fund; and UK Community Partnership Fund.

Outcomes (The measurable differences made)

- Maximum 14 Growth Deal projects to be prioritised for further assessment by May 2021.
- Maximum 14 Strategic Outline Cases signed-off by lead NI Department in 2021/22.
- Funding and Governance arrangements agreed in 2021/22.
- Re-assess the proposed projects based on the SOC's by 31st March 2022.

Outputs – Update for April-September 2021

- May 2021 - Full Council agreed six key themes and 14 projects.
- September 2021 - the Council agreed Governance Framework and roles and responsibilities (pre-Heads of Terms).

- September 2021 – the Growth Deal Programme Management Office established.
- Five SoCs currently under development

2021/22 Performance Improvement Objective 3

We will introduce a robust arrangement for engaging with our citizens

Senior Responsible Officer

Head of Performance

Why has this objective been chosen?

This Improvement Objective is a rollover from the previous Performance Improvement Plan, as the restrictions put in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic seriously affected our ability to proceed with engagement in the form that we had planned. However, the core reasons for wanting to pursue such an Objective remain, so Council has committed to completing this work and delivering this improvement with in the 2021/22 reporting year.

Critical self-analysis has identified that Council requires a more innovative and direct engagement relationship with citizens and rates payers

In order for Council to fully understand the impact of its service delivery, for Council to understand where it needs to improve, and for Council to receive consistent and accurate feedback on how it performs, it is key that we develop the arrangements that we have for engaging with our citizens.

Direction from the NIAO audit of arrangements for Performance Improvement highlighted that Council was lacking in defined, representative and statistically accurate arrangements for gathering the views and opinions of the citizens of the Borough

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2019/20)

- We will work with internal and external partners to conduct a Citizen's Survey which will be open to every household in Causeway Coast and Glens
- We will create a survey for Causeway Coast and Glens that will include key questions and measures on the services we provide, the perceptions of our citizens and indicators that are demonstrative of how we are delivering for our citizens.
- We will report to Council and to our citizens with the full outcomes of this consultation exercise

Outcomes (The measurable differences made)

- We will receive Citizen's survey response from at least 2000 households across the Borough
- We will publish the findings of the first Causeway Coast and Glens Citizen's Survey

Outputs and Outcomes – Update for April-November 2021

- As of August 2021, the scope, method, questions and format had been agreed.
- Party leads and senior managers have had input into this development
- PR and Communications Plan for Citizens survey beginning to be rolled out

- Leaflets will be delivered to every household, to all citizens, asking them to take part before the end of November 2021. Delivered by Royal Mail.
- The logistical rollout of this exercise has taken slightly longer than originally planned, but Council is very confident that the process will be completed and reported to Members before the end of this Business Year in March 2022

2021/22 Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will develop and embed improvements to Council's Performance Improvement and Business Planning processes

Senior Responsible Officer

Head of Performance

Why has this objective been chosen?

Council has been working over the past 2-3 years to develop and grow a culture of Performance, Improvement and Reporting within its corporate structures. This has been acknowledged by both Internal Audit and the annual NIAO Performance Audit. However, there has been still some distance to travel, and indeed many of the recommendations and areas for improvement made within Audits have been focused on the following themes:

- Business Planning – Date of approval within financial year, regularity of update reporting, quality of indicators and outcomes included
- Benchmarking – low levels of Benchmarking performance against other Local Authorities
- Lack of coordinated, accessible, digital Performance Management software
- Requirement for an updated Performance Improvement Policy and the creation of an agreed and documented Performance Improvement Cycle for Council.

This Objective has therefore been chosen to ensure prominence is given to addressing these issues highlighted above and to bring the clear improvements that they will present.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2021/22)

- Deliver improved Directorate Business Plans to Council
- Complete our first full year as a contributing member of the APSE led National Performance Benchmarking Network
- Design, develop, and rollout a new Performance Management Software solution for Council called "**Perform**".
- Develop and deliver an agreed and combined documented Performance Improvement Cycle and Policy for Council
- Assess training needs of staff and Elected Members in relation to the Council's Performance Improvement Cycle, and then provide said training

Outcomes (The measurable differences made)

- Deliver 2021/22 Directorate specific Business Plans to Council, containing key indicators, outcomes and budgetary targets, by end May 2021
- Provide a mid year update on progress against Business Plan targets to Council Committee by end December 2021

- Contribute a full batch of 2020/21 performance related data to the APSE Performance Benchmarking portal by July 2021, as well as a further refined contribution for the “second batch data capture” exercise in February 2022.
- Complete the build and population of the Perform software solution for the year 2021/22 by end July 2021
- Use Perform to collate data and issue reports for Business Plan updates in December 2021 and to collate data and issue reports for APSE Indicators return in January 2022
- A new Performance Improvement Cycle and Policy Document to be agreed by Council by September 2021.

Outcomes and Outputs – Update for April-November 2021

- Performance related updates provided to Committee in April, May and September and November 2021

National Performance Benchmarking

- All requirements and data submissions where met for the July 2021 APSE submission deadline.
- Benchmarking outcomes following this process were included within Council’s Performance Self-Evaluation document for 2020/21 and outcomes have been reported to CPR Committee in September 2021
- Analysis under way to determine the extent to which Council will be taking part in the 2nd batch of APSE data submission in January 2022, mainly as a result of Council’s successful data submission in July 2021

Business Planning

- All Service and Directorate Business Plans where completed and approved within the first 2 months of the business year
- Services are working towards 6 month reporting of their Business Plan targets to their Committees before the end of 2021 with Environmental Services and Corporate Services submitting updates to Committee in November 2021

Perform

- Development and population of Perform 21/22 has been completed for 2021/22 APSE indicators and 2021/22 Service Business Plan indicators.
- PERFORM system is almost ready for Services to utilise for performance reporting in tandem with Committee reporting. Lessons continue to be learned in terms of development, management and updating of the system.
- Council still awaits the outcome of review/update of Performance Improvement legislation and Performance Duty responsibilities before progressing work on an update Performance Improvement Policy.

2021/22 Performance Improvement Objective 5

We will improve the environment in which we live by continuing to develop and improve our approaches to, and processes for, managing the removal and recycling of waste from our homes and streets.

Senior Responsible Officer

Director Environmental Services

Why has this objective been chosen?

The year 2020/21 has reminded us all just how important our waste disposal and recycling functions are. In the face of Covid-19 most areas of our business where closed or significantly reduced, but Council's Operations Team continued their vital work lifting bins, cleansing streets and processing waste. Such a vital service needs to be continually developed and new ideas considered to help maintain its strong performance.

2021 is very likely to be the year of "staycations", Council's statutory environmental commitments, as well as newly agreed Corporate Strategy strategic priority of - Climate Change and Our Environment - all further set the rationale for such an Improvement Objective.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2021/22)

Increased visibility of advice and information for citizens and visitors with regards to litter and recycling.

Conduct a trial of an 80 Litre black bin (residual) (one day collection). This will trial the potential replacement of the standard 240 litre black bin an aims to increase blue and brown bin recycling.

Council will to contribute to the Northern Ireland Waste from Households statutory recycling targets of 50%

Council will introduce the Community Environmental Grant Programme for Community Groups. Applications will focus on waste reduction/reuse, energy saving and sustainability.

Implement a programme aimed at responsible dog ownership to reduce littering and dog fouling.

Outcomes (The measurable differences made)

- Deliver Community Environmental Grant Programme with a Total grant funding pot of £10,500 available and a Maximum grant of £500 available per application.
- Council will aim to exceed its previous performance of 50% in terms of its Statutory Recycling targets
- Trial a 180 Litre black bin (residual) for circa 700 houses
- Reduce number of dog fouling and litter complaints by 15%
- 5% of all dog licence holders to sign up to responsible dog ownership scheme in first year of implementation.

Outputs and Outcomes – Update for April-September 2021

- Consultation ongoing between DAERA and Councils on future waste collection systems
 - "Towards a LitterSmart Borough", Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Litter Strategy 2021 to 2025 has been agreed in draft form and now is open to a 12 week public consultation period.
 - Statutory Recycling target of 50% rate has been exceeded
 - Community Environmental Grant Programme successfully launched
 - Responsible dog walker scheme was launched in April 2021 with associated press releases and the creation of a new webpage on the Council website which allowed applicants to join the scheme and receive their Green Dog Walker pack containing a branded dog lead and collar, foul bags and a mini torch. The scheme has been very popular among the public with 712 dog owners signing up for the

scheme. 690 Green Dog Walker packs have been sent out to those who joined up and Council continues to work through the applications to provide packs.

- Fouling complaints down 13% or previous years
- A new litter enforcement service, working with private contractors commenced 2nd August 2021. In the first month of this new service 749 fixed penalty notices were issued for litter offences.

The reduction in the levels of staff absenteeism was welcomed by Committee.

Alderman Duddy requested a breakdown of sickness levels of frontline staff, compared to staff working from home in order to gauge the effectiveness of working from home. The Director of Corporate Services advised the figures requested could be provided. He further suggested the figures for 2020/2021 be used as a baseline. The Performance Officer explained that 2020/21 was a unusual year because of the Pandemic, and the reason for using 2019/20 was to enable reasonable comparisons.

It was considered that increased flexibility in the system to allow staff to work from home could be a contributing factor to the reduction in staff sickness levels. Alderman Baird reflected on her own experience and highlighted her increased levels of productivity when working from home and encouraged Council to consider a flexible approach to working hours if it improved productivity within Council.

Discussion occurred around looking beyond the figures to consider why staff were on sick leave and provide the appropriate support to ensure sickness levels remain low.

Alderman S McKillop commented that sickness levels were still at an unsustainable level, that a Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) report shows that no Council looks at measuring, analysing and understanding the impact of sickness absence and she suggested that this Council look at this and consider putting other measures in place for staff wellbeing. She requested that more information be provided.

In response to questions, the Director of Corporate Services advised that return to work interviews were completed after sickness leave and a detailed mechanism is in place to monitor absence and promote staff wellbeing. She also advised that days of the week and the time of year when staff were absent are also monitored. The Director further advised that a detailed absence report is provided to the Audit Committee. The Director confirmed that over 80% of sickness absence is long term.

Regarding Performance Objective 5 Alderman Duddy commented Mid and East Antrim Council appear to provide individual households with extra brown bins and queried if Council could provide more brown bins to households who have large quantities of green waste to encourage recycling. The Performance Officer confirmed he would liaise with the recycling team regarding this and invite them to respond to Alderman Duddy. Alderman Duddy reflected on the trial of the smaller black bins and requested statistics on it.

5. CORPORATE SERVICES BUSINESS PLANS – MONTH 6 REVIEW

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

The purpose of this report is to present to Members with the 6 Month Progress Review of the 2021/2022 Corporate Services (CS) and Performance Business Plans.

Introduction

Council previously approved the CS and Performance Business Plans in April/May 2021.

- The plans for each of the service areas were developed based upon:
- The emerging actions from the Community Planning Process.
- The Council's exiting Corporate Plan.
- Endorsed service area strategies.
- Relevant Central government strategies and policies.
- Council decisions and direction from the 2020 / 21 period.

The Purpose of The Plans

The purpose of the annual business plans is to:

- Give a clear sense of what the service is for and the challenges it faces.
- Show how it is supporting Council's priorities.
- Show how it is contributing to the efficiency drive and transformation of service delivery.
- Show how it is aligning its resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Help us to hold ourselves to account and ensure we deliver for Council and its residents.
- Bring key information together in one place about the service, which Members, staff and stakeholders can understand.

6 Month Business Plan Review

Each of the Business Plans are included in Appendix 1 – 5 and provide an update on progress mid-year using the RAG indicators.

Appendix 1 - Democratic and Central Services

Appendix 2 – ICT

Appendix 3 - ODHR

Appendix 4 - Policy & Community Planning

Appendix 5 - Performance

Recommendation

Committee is asked to note the CS and Performance Business Plans 6 months review for the 2021/22 period.

Alderman S McKillop noted that she had concerns regarding the ODHR Business Plan, in terms of Strategic Context and implications, regarding continual demand of effort and time on HR, the need for a co-ordinated approach and strategy to address complex employee relations culture, the volume and complexity of employee relations issues. The demand on time that will limit the capacity to

implement new deliverables going forward, and the impact of the demanding employee relations culture on the HR team's resilience.

Alderman S McKillop stated more data was needed on what this would mean for service delivery and requested that it was looked at again.

6. CORPORATE POLICIES

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

Purpose of Report

To present two draft Corporate Policies, (Gifts and Hospitality Policy for Elected Members and Officers and Communications Strategy and Action Plan), for Members' information and for consultation.

Background

Draft Gifts and Hospitality Policy

In 2017-2018 the audit of Corporate Governance recommended: Priority Rating 3, that a *Gifts and Hospitality Policy should be put in place or a monetary limit for accepting gifts or hospitality should be defined and communicated to all staff and elected members.* A draft policy was presented in the 2017/2018 year to Trade Unions but was not accepted at that time. Further work has been done and a draft policy has been developed following internal consultation which has been approved by SLT. The draft policy will be presented again, as part of the consultation process, to Trade Unions.

Draft Communications Strategy and Action Plan

Council approved a Communications Strategy in 2017 and this policy was due for review. The review has been completed and a draft Strategy and Action Plan have been approved by SLT.

Next steps

Members are asked to consider the content of both draft policies and provide any comments to the Democratic and Central Services Manager by 31st December 2021.

The policies will also be presented to Trade Unions for consultation.

Following receipt of comments the policies will be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for adoption in January 2022.

It is recommended that the Draft Gifts and Hospitality Policy for Elected Members and Employees and the Draft Communications Strategy and Action Plan are noted for consultation purposes and Members provide comments to the Democratic and Central Services Manager by December 31st 2021.

Alderman Baird requested a presentation on the Communication Strategy, to enable Members to discuss in more detail and raise issues.

The Chair confirmed the presentation could be arranged.

7. CONFERENCES

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

The purpose of the report is to inform Elected Members of conferences and courses they may wish to attend.

The following are listed:

(i) Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2021

Wednesday 8th December 2021 – Hybrid Event – Galgorm Resort and Spa, Ballymena/Online

Cost: Voluntary/Community/Councils Delegate Fee: £165 + VAT @ 20% = £198

- [Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2021 \(agendani.com\)](http://agendani.com)

(ii) Climate Change Training for NI Councillors in partnership with NILGA (circulated)

Thursday 9th and Monday 13th December 2021 – 2.00pm - 5:30pm – Online, Zoom

Cost: £10 fee to receive accreditation.

It is recommended that Corporate Policy & Resources Committee approve the Conferences/Courses listed.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

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

The following was listed

9.1 Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO): Complaints Handling consultation – Email Update from J Matthews (Complaints Standards Manager) Consultation Closed

Update summary

NIPSO's public consultation closed on 30 September 2021. NIPSO has received over 100 responses to its consultation from a wide range of respondents i.e. the public, public bodies and advocacy and support groups.

NIPSO staff are currently working alongside the external consultants appointed to gather and analyse NIPSO's consultation responses. Careful consideration is being given to all the responses received on the draft Statement of Principles

(SOP), Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) and the proposed sectoral approach. This work is taking time to carefully analyse. A report of the findings will be produced and available when this work is complete.

NIPSO staff and the Ombudsman are also currently engaging with the NI Assembly on the draft SOP. This is necessary to implement NIPSO's complaint standards role and further enact the Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016, in particular,

Section 35(1):

"The Ombudsman must publish a statement of principles concerning complaints handling procedures of listed authorities"; and

Section 35(2):

"The first statement of principles is not to be published unless a draft of the statement has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly".

It is anticipated that the necessary documentation and engagement with the Assembly and NIPSO will conclude before Christmas. NIPSO will therefore inform you when the process has completed.

NIPSO is currently considering the sector(s) it will engage with first in the implementation of a MCHP. It is anticipated that this decision will be confirmed and communicated to the public and public sector bodies in the new year.

NIPSO is also arranging for the recruitment of its complaints standards team who will assist in the implementation of NIPSO's complaint's standards role e.g. training, support and engagement.

NIPSO is currently busy completing the above work at this time. NIPSO will continue to provide updates and will provide a link to the report of the findings of the public consultation when it becomes available.

9.2 Consultation on extending the provisions within Schedule 27 of the Coronavirus Act 2020

Consultation letter (circulated) received detailing the proposals to extending the provisions made in Schedule 27 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 for facilitating remote hearings for all courts and statutory tribunals. The consultation will run from 1 November to 5 pm on 26 November 2021.

10. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters to report to the Partnership Panel.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Alderman S McKillop

Seconded by Councillor McLean and

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

* **Members of the Press left the meeting at 7:29pm.**

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.

The Chair advised Committee of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded 'In Committee'.

11. LAND AND PROPERTY SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2021

Minutes previously circulated.

11.1 REQUESTS TO USE COUNCIL LAND REF NO 74/21 85/21

The Sub Committee had deferred consideration of the request to Committee. Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

There are 2 requests for the Committee to consider:

Ref 74/21 – A request to use Council land at Portballintrae Village Hall Car Park to install an art piece to reflect the “Girona Gold Story” and the Spanish Armada of 1588 on a permanent basis. This will be a permanent memorial to “La Girona” and those who lost their lives on Board.

Ref 85/21 - A request to use Council land at Beach Road Car Park, Portballintrae for the unveiling of La Girona Memorial and musical Irish/Spanish Cultural event on the 11th of June 2022.

Both requests were previously presented to the Land & Property Sub Committee on Wednesday 3rd November 2021 who deferred consideration of the requests as detailed below:

Ref 74/21 - recommend that Council defer consideration for additional information on the specific location.

Ref 85/21 - recommend that Council defer consideration for additional information in respect of what arrangement Council has in place to assist community organisations.

The applicant for both these requests is keen to get a decision “in principle” to enable them to make firm bookings for the event.

The requests were circulated for internal consultation. The comments received have been summarised in the table at Appendix 1 (circulated).

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee is asked to consider application Ref No 74/21 – Use of Council land at Beach Road Car Park, Portballintrae to install a permanent memorial to “La Girona” and those who lost their lives on board in 1588 and application Ref No 85/21 - Use of Council land at Beach Road Car Park,

Portballintrae for the unveiling of La Girona Memorial and musical Irish/Spanish Cultural event on the 11th of June 2022 and make a recommendation to Council.

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Councillor McCaw

- to proceed and approve the requests from the Portballintrae Community Association.

During debate concerns were expressed about the location of the artwork, the likelihood of antisocial behaviour, if Council would be expected to place a wall around the artwork if the group do not receive the required funding, the permanency of the structure, the lifespan of the material of the artwork and the maintenance of same. The input of the Coast and Countryside Officers was also requested. Some members expressed support for projects which promote the history of Portballintrae. Members also commented that there was a need to seek a balance between obligations to community groups and obligations to Council organised projects.

The Director of Corporate Services referred to the report to confirm that the Coast and Countryside Officers had been involved in initial consultation with the applicant regarding the siting of the artwork. The Director confirmed that there will be further conversations subject to Council approval in principle.

Amendment

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Alderman S McKillop

- To recommend that Council defer the decision regarding the installation of the memorial until such time as a presentation from the Coast and Countryside Officers is received regarding Council's potential Environmental Improvement Scheme and further information is provided.

Referring to the report, the Chair confirmed that the artwork would be a mesh structure, and clarified that Committee were asked to approve the application, in principle, in order that the applicant could apply for funding.

The Democratic and Central Services Manager clarified the funding application was in relation to the cultural event, planned as part of the unveiling of the artwork, not for the structure itself.

The Chair put the amendment to the Committee to vote.
6 Members voted For; 6 Members voted Against; 1 Member abstained
The Chair used her casting vote For and declared the motion carried.

The Chair then advised that the request to Use of Council land at Beach Road Car Park, Portballintrae for the unveiling of La Girona Memorial and musical Irish/Spanish Cultural event on the 11th of June 2022, would now be considered.

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Councillor McCaw and

AGREED - To recommend that Council approve the use of the land for the cultural event, in principle, (reference 85/21) Use of Council land at Beach Road Car Park, Portballintrae for the unveiling of La Girona Memorial and musical Irish/Spanish Cultural event on the 11th of June 2022.

11.2 REQUEST TO USE COUNCIL LAND REF 106/21 USE OF MAIN STREET CARPARK, LIMAVADY

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Head of Capital Works, Energy and Infrastructure.

The purpose of this report item is to request that Elected Members consider granting or not, retrospective access to a private contractor in relation to access through Councils Main Street Car Park, Limavady, whilst occupying 4no. car park spaces to gain access to the rear of a property along Main Street.

The subject car park is at maximum capacity, given its location and free of charge status, with the loss of 4no. car parking places displacing regular users, which in turn encourages non-compliance in respect of available car parking spaces, for which additional management / enforcement measures will be required.

Proposal

- 3.1 An external professional Estate Agent carried out a valuation on the value of such lands, for the period of 12-months, commencing November 1st, 2021.
- 3.2 In the event that retrospective permission is granted; the following will need to be put in place with the said contractor; -
 1. Detailed written methodology and physical segregation measures put in place, between the Contractor, vehicles and pedestrians utilising the car park.
 2. A legal 'License Agreement'.
 3. Signed joint 'Condition Report' of the car park thoroughfare which is being utilised by the contractor.
 4. A 'bond' will need to be put in place, paid by the contractor at commencement of the aforesaid agreement with Council (which will be returned upon satisfactory handover condition).
 5. A contractor cleansing regime be put in place to ensure the car park is cleaned as required from contractor access activities.
 6. Points 1 & 5 are reviewed by Councils H&S Department for review and acceptance.
 7. The said contractor shall be invoiced for Council expenses – including the professional Estate Agency Valuation fee & Officer time associated with compiling a Condition Survey Report.

It is recommended that Members consider the access request and advise if they wish to grant access approval – subject to items 3.1 & 3.2 above.

Note

If access is not granted, the four public car parking spaces shall be reinstated asap.

In response to questions the Head of Capital Works, Energy and Infrastructure advised that it was his understanding that Council did not have to apply for planning permission to allow the contractor to access the building site. He confirmed that no request has been received from the contractor to place a structure on Council's land. He further advised that a third party had completed the calculations for the valuation based on other areas in Limavady in relation to what they charge for car parking and confirmed that the car park is a free car park, and is fully utilised most days.

The Democratic and Central Services Manager confirmed the current request to use land was in relation to a request from a private contractor for temporary access through the car park to a building site. The previous application, which was refused by Council and which members were referred to was from a business owner for customer access on a permanent basis at the same site.

Comparisons were made to a recent application to use part of a car park in Portrush, by a contractor. The Head of Capital Works, Energy and Infrastructure advised that although the Council had approved the request in principle, and officers were working with the contractor to implement the approval, the contractor had moved to a more favourable site. Members expressed disappointment.

In response to a query from a Member, in relation to the ownership of a wall in the Limavady carpark, The Head of Capital Works, Energy and Infrastructure advised that the ownership of the wall was not established and it did not appear to be Council property. He further advised that Council's Land and Property solicitor had reviewed the ownership.

In response to questions, the Chair confirmed the Contractor had requested to use the Council car park after Council had received complaints from members of the public.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Baird

-To recommend that Council defer making a decision until the next Full Council meeting and a more detailed report brought detailing the implications surrounding planning, insurance considerations, health and safety aspects, comparison to the previous report and the movement of heavy vehicles in the car park.

The Chair asked the proposer, Councillor Wilson to confirm that he was content for the following to be added to the proposal – insurance, health and safety, comparison to previous report and the movement of the heavy vehicles in the carpark.

Councillor Wilson confirmed his agreement with the consent of his seconder Alderman Baird.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED - To recommend that Council defer making a decision until the next Full Council meeting and a more detailed report brought detailing the implications surrounding planning, insurance considerations, health and safety aspects, comparison to the previous report and the movement of heavy vehicles in the car park.

Matters Arising

11.3 Minutes of Land and Property Sub Committee held 3 November 2021 Ref 87/20 – Portstewart, The Crescent – Repainting of Biblical Text (Item 5.1)

Councillor McLean discussed how the biblical text has been in situ for many years and how permission had been granted previously for the re-painting of the biblical text and further commented that Northern Ireland was considered a Christian country and most people will avail of a Church at some point in life for example a baptism, wedding, or funeral.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor McLean

Seconded by Alderman Finlay

- To recommend that Council give permission to re-paint the text and does not carry out equality screening.

During debate consideration was given to permission being granted previously, adhering to policies and procedures, the text being situ for many years, planning permission having been granted and equality consultation.

Alderman Baird at this point declared an interest in the item due to her role on the planning committee and withdrew from the discussion.

Alderman Duddy, with the agreement of the proposer, Councillor McLean added that Council give permission for the individual to renew the text as and when required and that the individual write to Council to advise when the repainting was being completed.

Alderman Duddy requested a recorded vote.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that Council had requested expert equality advice. An independent consultant had presented to the Land and Property Sub Committee outlining the implications for Equality, and the written report was subsequently presented to Land and Property and circulated to all Members. The Director of Corporate Services advised Committee the advice was that Council may be in breach of its Section 75 Equality scheme, and therefore maybe at risk of a legal challenge. Alderman Hillis requested a legal view. The Democratic and Central Services Manager advised that the Equality expert within her report had highlighted the risk to Council of challenge, if equality screening was not carried out. She further advised that legal advice could be sought and presented to Members.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Alderman Finlay

– To recommend that Council gives permission to re-paint the text and does not carry out equality screening; that Council give permission for the individual to renew the text as and when required; that the individual write to Council to advise the Council that repainting is being completed.

The Chair put the Amendment to the Committee to vote.
8 Members voted for; 2 members voted Against; 2 Members abstained.
The Chair declared the Amendment carried

Recorded Vote Table

For (8)	Alderman Duddy, Fielding, Finlay, Hillis, Knight - McQuillan, S McKillop
	Councillors McLean, Wilson
Against (2)	Councillors McGurk, McCaw
Abstain (2)	Councillors Beattie, Dallat O'Driscoll

* **Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 9:32 pm.**

* **Alderman Baird re-joined the meeting.**

11.4 Adoption of the Minutes

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee meeting held Wednesday 3 November 2021 are approved and recommendations therein including recommendations at Item 11.1 and 11.3 above.

12. PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT OF AGENCY SERVICES

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information relating to the Tender for the Provision of Temporary Labour from 1st April 2022 and to request approval to begin the tender process. The contract will commence from the date of award until 31st March 2024, with the possibility to extend with three one-year options subject to performance.

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council tendered for a recruitment agency to provide temporary workers to Council in 2017. This contract was awarded to Staffline (formerly Grafton Recruitment) for an initial period of one year with the ability to extend for a further four years. The current contract is due to expire on 31st March 2022 and as the extension option has been utilised there is no further scope to extend further.

Council will continue to need temporary labour in the period 2022 to 2027, albeit at a reduced level in accordance with the current plans to increase the levels of permanent staffing. Accordingly, Council must tender or appoint from a suitable framework agreement a supplier in a manner than is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations.

Current Contract

At present, Council has a contract in place awarded under Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to Staffline for the provision of Temporary Labour. This contract uses a so-called 'master vendor' model where a single provider of recruitment services takes responsibility for fulfilling all the temporary recruitment needs and is itself a provider of temporary labour.

Whilst this model is generally successful in obtaining the majority of Council's needs, there are some areas of difficulty in obtaining the necessary staff. These are either a consequence of general labour market issues, which are beyond the capability of a provider to solve by itself, such as licenced LGV and HGV drivers which are a national shortage or in specialist knowledge worker roles where the current contract is not well aligned to obtaining such labour.

Development of an Alternative Model of Delivery

Officers have undertaken a thorough process of internal and market engagement to assess the best delivery approach for Council. As part of this process, officers have considered the issues raised by both internal and external stakeholders and have concluded that the procurement should be split between two lots to take account of the different capabilities of supplies. Specifically, officers intend to procure in line with the model circulated.

Under Lot 1 (indicated in blue), Council will engage a single provider for manual, administrative and non-specialist labour. Under such a model, the provider will act as a master vendor (i.e. supply workers from its own talent pool) and will be responsible for the selection of workers i.e. Council will request a role to be filled, the supplier will, having ensured necessary qualification, supply a worker.

Under Lot 2 (indicated in green), Council will engage a second single provider for (primarily) knowledge workers. Under such a model, the provider will again act as a master vendor but will primarily identify multiple candidates for the Council to select between; either by interview or CV sift or a combination thereof.

Officers have rejected three alternative strategies; a single master vendor for all roles, a single master vendor for manual, administrative and non-specialist labour and multiple approved suppliers for knowledge worker roles and a neutral vendor strategy. A description of the model and reason for rejection was set out in the table circulated.

Procurement Approach

The Finance Department has engaged a consultant to support the Council in a new tender exercise.

It is proposed that the procurement is an open tender exercise under the Public Contracts Regulations, with the invitation to tender to be issued week commencing 13th December 2021.

Due to the timelines imposed by the Regulations, the tender is likely to complete toward the end of February for approval by this Committee on 22nd February 2022 and Council on 1st March 2022. It may therefore be necessary to seek a brief extension of the current contract to accommodate a mobilisation period.

Planned reduction of temporary labour usage

The assessment of the most economically advantageous tender will include assessment of costs. This shall be modelled in accordance with the planned recruitment to roles in the Operations, Estates and Sport and Wellbeing departments. Following the population of structures, temporary labour will be utilised for absences such as cover for sickness, maternity, seasonal, funded posts etc.

It is recommended that Council considers the information presented within the report and

- Approves the initiation of the tender process for the provision of Temporary Labour to Council in line with the model recommended at section 2.2 ie Lot 1 and Lot 2
 - Under Lot 1 (indicated in blue), Council will engage a single provider for manual, administrative and non – specialist labour. Under such a model, the provider will act as a master vendor (i.e. supply workers from its own talent pool) and will be responsible for the selection of workers i.e. Council will request a role to be filled, the supplier will, having ensured necessary qualification, supply a worker.
 - Under Lot 2 (indicated in green), Council will engage a second single provider for (primarily) knowledge workers. Under such a model, the provider will again act as a master vendor but will primarily identify multiple candidates for the Council to select between; either by interview or CV sift or a combination thereof.
- With the invitation to tender being issued week commencing 13th December 2021
- As a contingency and in order to ensure business continuity, investigate the possibility to seek a brief extension of the current contract to accommodate a mobilisation period, if required.

Alderman Duddy expressed dissatisfaction regarding content of report, particularly in relation to lack of detail in relation to costs and timescales, and concerns in relation to “slack” within the system and use of Agency staff for short term absence.

In response to questions the Director of Corporate Services verbally provided the costs for agency services for year ending 2020 and 2021. It was confirmed that costs were not anticipated to be as high going forward due to populating the

organisational structure in the next 2 – 5 years. Further details regarding costs to be circulated.

The Acting Head of Organisational Development & Human Resources advised that she did not have the information to hand regarding detailed costs. Concerns were raised that Members were expected to agree to the new tender for temporary labour with no idea of the cost to Council. The Acting Head of Organisational Development & Human Resources confirmed that the budget was currently included within the relevant Directorates. She further advised that the number of agency staff is projected to decrease in the next year although agency services will continue to be needed in certain circumstances for example seasonal posts and long term absences. It was stated that frontline services could not be provided if agency staff were not in place.

In response to questions from Alderman Duddy, the external consultant advised he had not costed the model presented, that this still needs to be completed and a cap can be applied. The major cost of the agency contract was the cost of labour. The external consultant provided a response in relation to a queries raised regarding the implications if the contract was not in place before the existing contract expired.

The Chair confirmed the tender was required to be issued in December to meet the deadline of having a new contract in place.

In response to questions the Director of Corporate Services confirmed further information would be provided at the Full Council meeting.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

AGREED - To recommend that Council defer making a decision until the full Council meeting where more information regarding costs can be presented.

13. POPULATING THE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Confidential report, previously circulated, present by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

Following on from the Agency Workers and Vacancy Control, Populating the Organisation Structure update report presented to October Committee, the purpose of this report is to provide Members with a Progress report on populating the Organisation Structure from the Directors of Leisure and Development and Environmental Services, and associated timeline of the work completed since December 2020 to date regarding harmonising terms and conditions.

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee note this report.

In response to questions the Acting Head of Organisational Development & Human Resources advised that work was continuing to populate the

organisational structure and that negotiations were continuing with trade unions. Members were provided with details in relation to the on-going negotiations.

14. CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

The purpose of this report to provide Members with information on the current financial position of Corporate Services Directorate at the end of Period 6.

Recommendation

That Council note the information presented.

15. CORPORATE SERVICES ESTIMATES 2022/23

Verbal update provided by the Director of Corporate Services.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that further information would be provided in due course.

16. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS (NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 12(O))

There were no Items of Any Other Relevant Business notified.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Alderman Fielding and

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

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 10:24pm

Chair