

Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	30 June 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-2025)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

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

2.0 The following are listed:

2.1 From the Office of the Justice Minister, Naomi Long MLA Minister of Justice (correspondence dated 25 April 2022) (copy attached)

Re: Independent Members to the Northern Ireland Policing Board

Under Part III of Schedule 1 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Minister of Justice is responsible for the appointment of independent members to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board). The current term of appointment of three such members will expire in November this year and a further three members' terms of appointment will expire in March next year.

Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 1 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires consultation with the First Minister and deputy First Minister, district councils and such other bodies as are considered appropriate before making any appointment of independent members to the Board.

Views were sought by Friday 24th June 2022.

Circulated: All Councillors via email on Monday 10th June 2022.

2.2 National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region, The NAC NI Executive Committee (correspondence dated 7th June 2022) (copy attached)

Re: Review of The Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors

The NAC EC have produced the document to provide members with an update on the process currently engaged in, with the Department for Communities, in relation to a Review of the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors.

2.3 Northern Ireland Housing Council (correspondence dated 9th June 2022) (copy attached)

The Housing Council June bulletin dated 9th June 2022 and 490th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council minutes.

2.4 Award of Two Mineral Prospecting Licences, DG5/22 And DG6/22, to Dalradian Gold Limited (correspondence dated 13 June 2022) (copy attached)

The Department has considered all the issues raised during the consultation and has taken the decision to grant the two Mineral Prospecting Licences effective from 01 June 2022 and can be seen on the map using the link below.

[Mineral Prospecting Licences map - with council boundaries | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The Department has produced a report setting out its responses to the issues raised in the notification process which can be found on our website at:

[Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications MPLA1/22 \(Licence DG5/22\) and MPLA2/22 \(Licence DG6/22\) | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Dalradian Gold Ltd has been advised that while the granting of a Mineral Prospecting Licence confers rights on them in respect of exploring for minerals, they must get approval from the Department for any specific exploration activity they may wish to undertake under their licence. They have also been advised that some exploration activities may also require a range of further permissions from the Department and other regulatory authorities such as Councils, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) as appropriate.

(Circulated: All Councillors – Presented to Planning Committee 22nd June 2022)

2.5 Acknowledgements to Council correspondence (The Executive Office) and (NILGA, Partnership Panel) (copy available)

At its Council Meeting held 7th June 2022 Council considered correspondence from Alison McCullough, Chief Executive, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (correspondence dated 25 April 2022).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough are encouraged to make representative to Executive Office to highlight their concerns that local Councils are being required to take on roles from central government agencies, without budget, and to request that appropriate budget is provided to Councils for such activities.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council resolved to support the correspondence and write to The Executive Office; that Council pass the matter to NILGA (Northern Ireland Local Government Association) and the Partnership Panel. Correspondence was issued from Council on 16th June 2022.

An acknowledgement has been received from the Central Correspondence Unit, The Executive Office to advise, *“that in the absence from office of a*

First Minister and deputy First Minister at this time, it will not be possible to provide a response. You may wish to resubmit your correspondence following the appointment of First Minister and deputy First Minister”.

Further, NILGA Local Government Side, has acknowledged and informed Officers, the matter has been placed on the Agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Partnership Panel, to be held on Tuesday 28 June 2022 and briefing document will be tabled accordingly.

3.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



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Tel: 02890 765723
DOJ.MinistersOffice@justice-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: SUB-2040-2022

David Jackson
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Via email: David.jackson@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

9 June 2022

Dear David,

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

Under Part III of Schedule 1 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Minister of Justice is responsible for the appointment of independent members to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board). The current term of appointment of three such members will expire in November this year and a further three members' terms of appointment will expire in March next year.

Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 1 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires consultation with the First Minister and deputy First Minister, district councils and such other bodies as are considered appropriate before making any appointment of independent members to the Board.

I intend to launch a public appointment competition in the near future so as to establish a pool of suitable candidates from which new independent board members can be appointed. I would expect that the tranche of independent member appointments falling

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



due at the end of March 2023 to be made from the same pool of candidates successful at interview. I am commencing this competition now with a view to ensuring that appointments as future vacancies arise.

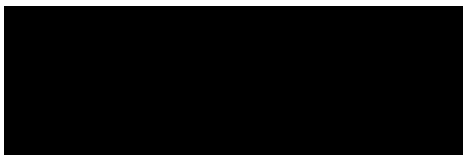
In the absence of a First Minister and deputy First Minister, I am inviting comments from The Executive Office: a view from the First Minister and deputy Minister would be welcome as soon as circumstances permit.

The competition will be administered in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland as issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. In seeking to appoint independent members to the Board, my Department is committed to the principles of public appointments on merit, with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

Should you have any views or queries regarding any aspect of the process please contact Fiona Scullion, the competition co-ordinator, by e-mail: Fiona.Scullion@justice-ni.gov.uk.

I would be grateful if responses could be provided by 24 June 2022.

Yours sincerely,



NAOMI LONG MLA
Minister of Justice

Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.



National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region



BY EMAIL

TO: ALL NAC NI REGION MEMBERS

FROM: THE NAC NI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC)

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCILLORS

DATE: 7 June 2022

The NAC EC have produced this document to provide members with an update on the process that we are currently engaged in, with the Department for Communities, in relation to a Review of the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors.

Background

Councillors in Northern Ireland are now in the final year of their second term of office under the new Local Government structures, following the reorganisation in April 2015 that reduced the number of Councils from 26 to 11.

Our members have dealt with many challenges both during and since this implementation, which involved the transfer of some central government functions and created new powers and responsibilities for Local Government and Elected Members.

From 2017 to 2020 Northern Ireland Councillors' work was seriously impacted upon by the breakdown of the Northern Ireland Assembly, whereby issues raised by Councillors could not be addressed or resolved without a Department for Communities Minister in place to make decisions. During this period, the EC wrote to Secretaries of State and Permanent Secretaries on various issues but received the same response, that these were matters for our Devolved Government.

As the only representative body for 462 Councillors within Northern Ireland, the EC was tasked by our members to seek a review of all aspects concerning the role of a Councillor.

Objectives

The NAC NI Region, EC has been representing our members in seeking:

- 1) *To have Councillors' working conditions aligned to ensure equality for all elected members, across all Councils.***

- 2) *To have the Councillors allowances and benefits structure re-evaluated so that it is comparative to the provisions that are in place for other NI Public Representatives.***

These objectives were drawn up in response to issues that NAC NI Members have raised over the past 6 years, particularly around uniformity across Councils in relation to the resources, materials and benefits that are provided to Councillors to enable them to carry out their role; and in relation to the disparity between Councillors allowances and that of Members of the NI Assembly, Members of Parliament, and their staff.



Objective 1

To have Councillors' working conditions aligned to ensure equality for all elected members, across all Councils.

Whilst it is recognised that some Councils may be supporting their Councillors well, there are extreme variances. It is felt that clear direction should be provided so that there is equality across Councils. Items suggested for inclusion are:

- Secretarial support, office facilities, equipment and stationery supplies deemed necessary to carry out Councillor duties.
- Insurance for Councillors to cover legal costs in relation to malicious Code of Conduct claims and press/social media reports/posts.
- Ongoing training to assist additional requirements such as sitting on Planning Committees, dealing with social media abuse, operating under the Code of Conduct etc. and to include a personal training allowance.
- Support with mental health problems that are in relation to the work being carried out.

Objective 2

To have the Councillors' allowances and benefits structure re-evaluated so that it is comparative to the provisions that are in place for other Northern Ireland Elected Representatives.

A review of the role of Councillors had been envisaged since the implementation of the Review of Public Administration involving the reduction from the 26 Councils to that of the 11-Council model.

For many years Councillors have felt that their work has been undervalued in relation to the work of MLAs and MPs. Councillors' allowances and pension entitlements are a great deal lower, and there are no ongoing severance arrangements. Suggestions put forward include:

- A review, to be carried out by an external body within a six-month period
- Commitment for the implementation of any recommended review
- Provision of an ongoing Severance Scheme for all departing Councillors
- Higher pension contributions from Councils by raising the percentage amount
- A scheme to make provision for Councillors who require extended periods of leave due to maternity, paternity, or sickness



National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region

Update

During 2018/19 the EC met with and/or corresponded with the Local Government Spokespersons from the main political parties and gained their support, we also have the support of NILGA. When the Assembly resumed in 2020, the EC put forward meeting requests to the DfC Minister(s) and the NI Assembly Committee for Communities.

These were difficult times to get meetings due to COVID-19 however, the EC presented the foregoing facts to DfC Officials in February 2021 and a document containing this information was forwarded to the NI Assembly Committee for Communities in March 2021 requesting a meeting with the aim of progressing a review. The NI Assembly Committee have not yet met with us; however, an excellent working relationship has been formed with Minister Hargey MLA and her most senior Officials with several meetings having taken place during a 6-month period late 2021 and early 2022.

The result of this is that Minister Hargey has agreed that an independently led review of the roles and responsibilities of Councillors is timely, and her Officials have drafted a Terms of Reference document with a view to progressing this. When approved by the Minister a working group consisting of members from various organisations including NAC and NILGA representatives will be appointed to take forward the review.

This information is available on the [NAC Website](#), updates are communicated to NAC Members' Delegates at our bi-monthly meetings and the minutes from these meetings are published on our website, we also provide details in the NAC Newsletters that are sent to all Members.

Footnote

The NAC NI Region is the only organisation that is run by Councillors to represent the interests of Local Government Elected Members from all parties and none, across the region. We aim to assist and support Councillors by providing advice, training and regular forums where information and experiences, in relation to the Councillor role, can be discussed and shared.

Each Council can nominate up to eight NAC Delegates and all are then invited to attend meetings and can be nominated to sit on the EC at our AGMs. All Members can attend meetings by sending an email request, the dates and details are on the [Meetings Page](#) of our website.

We rely on the continued support of our members and encourage all Members to engage and/or get actively involved. Please share our details with your party and/or Council colleagues so that we can grow our Councillor Family, as through working together we are stronger.

THE NAC NI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC)

<p>2.0</p>	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>No declarations were received.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>To adopt the Minutes of the 489th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 10th March 2022</p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Bresland and seconded by Alderman Speers and resolved, that the Minutes of the 489th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 10th March 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>Councillor Mark Cooper informed Members that the HAPPI principles scheme in Monkstown has now been completed and suggested a visit by the Housing Council.</p> <p><u>AGREED:</u> the Secretary to liaise with the relevant contacts to progress arrangements for the above visit.</p> <p>The forward workplan was noted.</p>	<p>M Cooper/ Secretary</p>

6.0

Update by the Department on the Department for Communities Housing Top Issues

Paul Price and David Polley gave an update of changes under the specific headings on the Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Issues:-

- Social Housing Development Programme – Newbuild Starts

Disappointment was expressed that the target was not met, 1,713 units against the target of 1,900 units, resulting in an underspend of £6.9m.

Mr Price explained highlighted the impact of schemes lost within the last week of the financial year due to planning / procurement issues, including the added difficulties associated with an annual budget, which could not rollover. The Department has no leverage for Housing Associations to submit schemes earlier in the year. He added that the Department are working on proposals to eliminate these obstacles and also working on multi annual budgets.

NOTED: Mr Price undertook to provide a breakdown of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) scheme losses that did not make the deadline at the end of the financial year 2022.

- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy

Concern was expressed that the funding allocation required to implement the proposals has not yet been allocated to proceed.

- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- NIHE Rent Increase
- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020

Mr Price explained that the original programme of works is under pressure to meet the deadline by 2023, due to several factors, and that a request has been made to the Department for Economy (DfE) for a possible extension to the deadline.

NOTED: Members requested a detailed report on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), outlining progress to date and the proposed schedule to the end of 2023.

P Price

P Price

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax • Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework • Long term rent trajectory • Affordability of social rents • Update on the Ukraine Refugee Scheme <p><i>Catherine McFarland and Michelle Kelly joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>Councillor Cooper reinforced the need for collaboration with local Councils in relation to the Ukraine Refugee Scheme. Mr Price confirmed Council engagement adding that Councils are also part of the wraparound support working group, which is a sub-group of the Operational Planning Group.</p> <p>NOTED: Paul Price undertook to provide an account of the role of local Councils within the Ukraine Resettlement Programme arrangements.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed and thanked the DfC representatives for their comprehensive briefing.</p>	<p>P Price</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Update on the Housing Executive’s Budget 2022/23 and the year ahead</p> <p>Catherine McFarland, Director of Finance Audit & Assurance gave an update on the Housing Executive’s Budget 2022/23 and the year ahead.</p> <p>It was explained that the Housing Executive had a draft 3 year budget which was withdrawn and remain in an annual budget process for 2022/23. Mrs McFarland highlighted the current financial position and the priorities to be delivered for the coming year.</p> <p>Members received a detailed breakdown of allocated monies received and how the resources will be allocated.</p> <p>NOTED: Councillor Cooper requested a breakdown of the £260m for 2022/23 landlord spend by Council areas.</p> <p>Mrs McFarland explained that all of the programmes to be delivered for the forthcoming year around the areas. She added that the Housing Investment Programme is delivered annually to each Council which provides in detail the planned schemes for each area.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mrs McFarland for a very comprehensive presentation.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

<p>8.0</p>	<p>Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) Year End 2021-2022</p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p>	
<p>9.0</p>	<p><u>Housing Starts February 2022</u></p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p>	
<p>10.0</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Chartered Institute of Housing All Ireland Housing Awards Friday 27th May in the Europa Hotel Belfast.</p> <p><u>AGREED:</u> that the Vice Chair, Councillor Mark Cooper, would represent the Housing Council at the above event. The Secretary also undertook to seek availability from another Member to fill the additional seat.</p> <p>Housing Executive Cavity Wall Insulation – Action Plan</p> <p>Members noted the Action Plan.</p> <p>Co-Own for over 55’s</p> <p>Members noted the publication.</p> <p><i>Travellers</i></p> <p>The Chair referred to an influx of travellers in certain areas, and sought information on the support they are being offered.</p> <p><u>NOTED:</u> the Chair undertook to provide specific details to the Secretary for follow up.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Chair</p>
<p>10.0</p>	<p><u>Date of next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9th June 2022 at 10 am via Zoom.</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 11.30 am.



CHAIR
Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald

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JUNE HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 9th June 2022 at 10.00 am via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

Present by Video Conferencing

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Michael Ruane	Newry & Mourne District

Apologies

Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Housing Executive

The Report provided the Housing Council with a monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined as follows:-

1. NIHE Revitalisation Programme - Progress Update
2. Finance - Budget Update 2022/23
3. Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland
4. Services for Women experiencing Chronic Homelessness
5. Supporting People Funding 2022/23
6. Covid Funding
7. COVID-19 Update and Return to the Workplace
8. NIHE Pay and Grading Review
9. Industrial Action
10. 2021/22 Performance Report
11. Cost of Living Crisis

Members also received a Presentation by the Department for Communities on Labour Market Recovery Invention.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the August Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: www.nihousingcouncil.org

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 11th August 2022 at 10.00 am via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

Contacts

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Fax: 028 9076 5384
E Mail: minerals@economy-ni.gov.uk

13 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

AWARD OF TWO MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES, DG5/22 and DG6/22, TO DALRADIAN GOLD LIMITED

You will be aware that a notification/consultation process took place from 17 January 2022 to 10 April 2022 concerning applications for two Mineral Prospecting Licences from Dalradian Gold Limited, referenced MPLA1/22 and MPLA2/22.

The Department has considered all the issues raised during the consultation and has taken the decision to grant the two Mineral Prospecting Licences effective from 01 June 2022 and can be seen on the map using the link below.

[Mineral Prospecting Licences map - with council boundaries | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The Department has produced a report setting out its responses to the issues raised in the notification process which can be found on our website at:

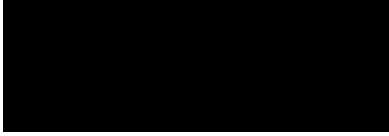
[Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications MPLA1/22 \(Licence DG5/22\) and MPLA2/22 \(Licence DG6/22\) | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Dalradian Gold Ltd has been advised that while the granting of a Mineral Prospecting Licence confers rights on them in respect of exploring for minerals, they must get approval from the Department for any specific exploration activity they may wish to undertake under their licence. They have also been advised that some exploration activities may also require a range of further permissions from the Department and other regulatory authorities such as Councils, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) as appropriate.

All advice received from statutory bodies has been passed on to the company concerned for attention and action as appropriate.

If you require any further information about the licensing process or about minerals prospecting activity, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours faithfully



Mark Wilson
MINERALS AND PETROLEUM BRANCH