



Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	7 May 2024
For Decision or For Information	FOR DECISION
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
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	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

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	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

Assessment (DPIA)	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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1.0 **Purpose of Report**

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

2.0 The following correspondence has been received:

2.1 **The Mayor, Derry City and Strabane District Council, 16 April 2024 (copy attached)**

Motion of Council: Palestinian Visa Scheme – Follow Up

Extract

Council previously forwarded you correspondence on the above matter on 16 February 2024 (copy enclosed).

However, Council has not yet received a response. I would therefore appreciate if you could forward your response at the earliest opportunity.

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 31 January 2024, the following Motion was passed:

That this Council notes with deep concern that at least 26,900 civilians have been killed as a result of the ongoing bombardment and siege of Gaza of which at least 10,000 are children Council notes that more than 8000 Palestinians are missing. Council Further notes there is an escalating death toll in the West Bank, with 370 people killed of which 99 are children.

Council is alarmed that almost 70 percent of the buildings in Gaza, including hospitals and schools, have been destroyed or severely damaged. The civilian population is facing a dire humanitarian crisis, with critical shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.

Council is particularly concerned that civilians are being confined to increasingly smaller areas without access to shelter or aid. This dire situation is leading to an escalation in civilian deaths due to bombing, shootings, starvation, disease, and lack of medical treatment.

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the British Prime Minister and Home Secretary, urging them to immediately implement a Palestinian Visa Scheme similar to the Ukraine Visa Scheme,

2. Write to an Taoiseach asking that a request is put to the EU commission

proposing a temporary protection directive, for those Palestinians seeking sanctuary, as was enacted in March 2022 in response to the Ukraine war.

3. Council will also write to the leaders of all political parties across Ireland urging them to support this call.

4. Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils and relevant Northern Ireland government departments, support this call pledging to facilitate and support the resettlement of Palestinian families in Ireland

With this in mind, we as a council affirm our support to UN General Assembly resolution 194, article 11, which enshrines the Palestinian Peoples' Right of Return.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

2.2 Chief Executive, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, 26 April 2024 (copy attached)

Extract

Dear Mayor,

On behalf of all my colleagues in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, I would like to thank you most sincerely for the wonderful ceremony and reception in Coleraine Town Hall last week.

We all deeply appreciate the significant honour given to all Health and Care workers by the Conferment of the Freedom of the Borough by Causeway Coast and Glens Council. All of us present on the day very much enjoyed the ceremony and reception, and staff were delighted in being recognised in this way.

Thank you also for your gift, which we will ensure is put to good use. Please accept my very best wishes to you, Elected Members, the Clerk and Chief Executive and his team, and thank you once again for this special recognition.

2.3 Margaret Keey, NI Public Ombudsmans Service, 26 April 2024 (copy attached)

Extract

I am writing to let you know that we have made changes to the way we describe the three stages of our investigation process.

Previously we used the following terms:

- Stage One - Initial Assessment*
- Stage Two - Assessment*
- Stage Three – Investigation*

These have now been changed to:

- Stage One - Assessment*
- Stage Two - Investigation*
- Stage Three - Further Investigation*

The main reason for deciding to rename the stages is because the new terms more accurately describe the work undertaken at each stage. This is particularly the case at Stage Two, which has changed from 'Assessment' to 'Investigation'.

At this stage our Investigating Officers obtain a detailed understanding of the issues of complaint and apply their professional judgment to decide on the most appropriate course of action. They can, for example, decide whether to facilitate a settlement between the public body and the complainant, whether to close a complaint without taking any further action, or whether the complexity of the case means it needs further or more detailed investigation.

As they obtain and analyse evidence from a variety of sources to help them make this decision, we believe 'Investigation', not 'Assessment', is the more suitable term to use at this stage.

Although our terminology has changed, all our other processes remain the same. The questions we ask and the type of information we request at each stage will not change. However, the change in terminology will be reflected when we report on the numbers of cases investigated or further investigated at the end of each business year.

Previously only those cases which progressed to Stage Three were referred to as being 'Investigated'. From now on (2024-25) we will also include all those cases which have progressed to Stage Two.

I have attached our 'About our Service' leaflet which explains our investigation process in more detail. This leaflet is also sent out to complainants when they contact our Office.

If you have any questions about the changes, or indeed any aspect of our service, please contact us on nipso@nipso.org.uk.

3.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.



Mayor / Méara
Councillor / An Comhairleoir
Patricia Logue

Our Ref: TJ/C49/24

16 April 2024

Mr David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

██████████@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dear Mr Jackson

Motion of Council: Palestinian Visa Scheme – Follow Up

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However, Council has not yet received a response. I would therefore appreciate if you could forward your response at the earliest opportunity.

Yours Sincerely

████████████████████

Councillor Patricia Logue
Mayor
Derry City and Strabane District Council

Enc.

COPY CORRESPONDENCE

Our Ref: TJ/C49/24

16 February 2024

Mr David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

██████████@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dear Mr Jackson

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Council is alarmed that almost 70 percent of the buildings in Gaza, including hospitals and schools, have been destroyed or severely damaged. The civilian population is facing a dire humanitarian crisis, with critical shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.

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Council resolves to:

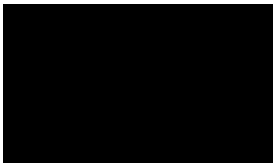
1. Write to the British Prime Minister and Home Secretary, urging them to immediately implement a Palestinian Visa Scheme similar to the Ukraine Visa Scheme,

2. **Write to an Taoiseach asking that a request is put to the EU commission proposing a temporary protection directive, for those Palestinians seeking sanctuary, as was enacted in March 2022 in response to the Ukraine war.**
3. **Council will also write to the leaders of all political parties across Ireland urging them to support this call.**
4. **Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils and relevant Northern Ireland government departments, support this call pledging to facilitate and support the resettlement of Palestinian families in Ireland**

With this in mind, we as a council affirm our support to UN General Assembly resolution 194, article 11, which enshrines the Palestinian Peoples' Right of Return.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



John Kelpie
Chief Executive

Chief Executive

26th April 2024

Councillor Steven Callaghan
Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Civic Headquarters
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
COLERAINE
BT52 1EY

Dear Mayor,

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We all deeply appreciate the significant honour given to all Health and Care workers by the Conferment of the Freedom of the Borough by Causeway Coast and Glens Council. All of us present on the day very much enjoyed the ceremony and reception, and staff were delighted in being recognised in this way.

Thank you also for your gift, which we will ensure is put to good use. Please accept my very best wishes to you, Elected Members, the Clerk and Chief Executive and his team, and thank you once again for this special recognition.

Yours sincerely



Jennifer Welsh
Chief Executive

Copy to: David Jackson MBE MBA MSc BEng (Hons), Clerk and Chief Executive

Bretten Hall, Antrim Area Hospital Site, Bush Road, ANTRIM, BT41 2RL
Tel: 028 94424327



26th April 2024

David Jackson
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

By email

Dear David

I am writing to let you know that we have made changes to the way we describe the three stages of our investigation process.

Previously we used the following terms:

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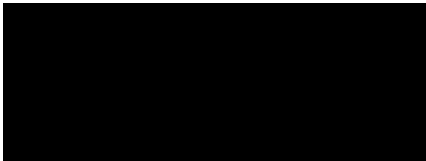
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I have attached our 'About our Service' leaflet which explains our investigation process in more detail. This leaflet is also sent out to complainants when they contact our Office.

If you have any questions about the changes, or indeed any aspect of our service, please contact us on nipso@nipso.org.uk .

Kind regards,



Margaret Kelly
NI Public Services Ombudsman



Northern Ireland

Public Services
Ombudsman

About our Service

We are here to help. If you need advice about making a complaint please get in touch.



Freephone

0800 34 34 24



nipso.org.uk



We investigate unresolved complaints about public services in Northern Ireland. We are independent of government, and our service is free.

If you have been treated unfairly by a public body, we may be able to help.

We make decisions on each case by taking into account all the available facts and evidence.

We are not an advocacy agency (an agency that acts in favour of a particular person), but we do make sure that the rights of people who complain are respected.

Our aim is to help public services improve through our investigations and reports.

How we deal with your complaint

Assessment



Investigation



Further Investigation

Assessment:

We first check to see whether the organisation you have complained about is on a list of those we are legally able to investigate.

We also check whether you have already complained to the public body, and if it has finished dealing with your complaint.

We would not generally investigate if:

- you complain to us more than six months after the public body completed its complaints process
- you are simply unhappy with the policy of a public body, or;
- you intend to take the issue to court.

If we can't take your complaint forward, we'll write to you and give you information about what you can do next.

If we can look at it in more detail we will progress it to the Investigation stage.

Investigation:

We will look at any evidence you have given us and how you have been personally affected by what happened.

We try to help resolve complaints early, so at this stage we may ask if the organisation has any proposals for settling the case without the need for any further investigation.

If there is no evidence to support the complaint or allegation, or if your complaint seems to be about minor breaches of policy and procedure we may close your case at this stage.

If we have gathered enough information to make a decision on your complaint we will explain our findings to you.

We may decide the public body behaved fairly. However, we may also conclude that it delivered a service badly or failed to deliver a service. If so, we will ask it to put things right.

Most of the complaints we receive are determined at this stage. However in some cases we will need to progress your complaint to the Further Investigation before we can make a decision.

Further Investigation:

At this stage we might ask the public body for more information to help us understand what happened. We may also need to interview witnesses.

If your complaint is about a complex medical issue, we may get advice from an independent professional advisor.

We will look at the relevant policies and procedures available to the public body at the time, and refer to our Principles of Good Administration and Good Complaint Handling to help us work out what should have happened.

During our investigation our job is to be unbiased and fair. We will evaluate all the information and make a decision on your complaint. This will be explained in a report which will be sent to you and the public body.

If we think that a public body got things wrong we will say so. We may ask it to apologise or to make changes to the way it does things. In other cases, for example if you have been affected financially because of mistakes by a public body, then we can recommend it gives you your money back.

On the rare occasions our recommendations are not accepted we can send a special report to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Publishing our reports

To help others understand what we do we may produce a summary of the report for our website, case digest or Annual Report. These will not name individuals but will usually include the name of the public body.

Our service standards:

We aim to:

- Acknowledge your correspondence within 3 working days of the date of its receipt
- Let you know within 10 working days of your complaint being received whether the assessment of your case has been completed
- Interview you by phone or arrange a face to face meeting where we believe this would be beneficial in considering your complaint
- Let you know within 50 working days of your complaint being received if it has been progressed for further investigation
- Let you know if we are unable to meet a target timescale and the reasons for this.
- We will also provide you with a revised timescale for response
- Explain your options if you disagree with our decision.

If we have referred your complaint to the Further Investigation stage, we aim to:

- Update you either by phone, email or letter approximately every 8 weeks on the progress of the investigation
- Agree a settlement or produce a draft report with our proposed findings and conclusions, within 50 weeks of informing you that your complaint was at this stage.

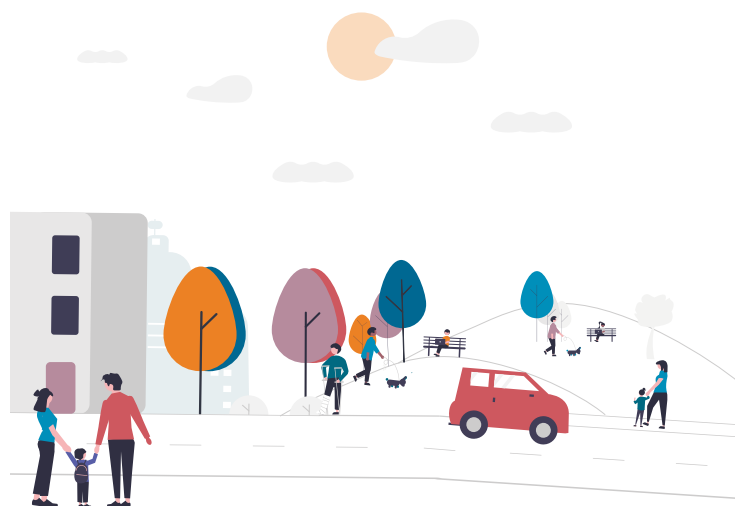
At all times we aim to treat you with respect and courtesy, and ask that you treat our staff in the same way.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

We will collect your personal information in order to process your complaint. We conduct our investigations in private, and are committed to protecting all of the information we hold. Further details relating to our information handling can be found in our Privacy Notice.

Complaints about our service

You have the right to make a complaint about us if you feel that the service you have received has fallen short of the standards you expect. If this is the case please see our Standards of Service complaints procedure on our website for more information.





Northern Ireland

Public Services
Ombudsman

**Please contact us if you
would like this form in
another language or format
(such as large print or Braille).**



Freephone
0800 34 34 24



nipso.org.uk

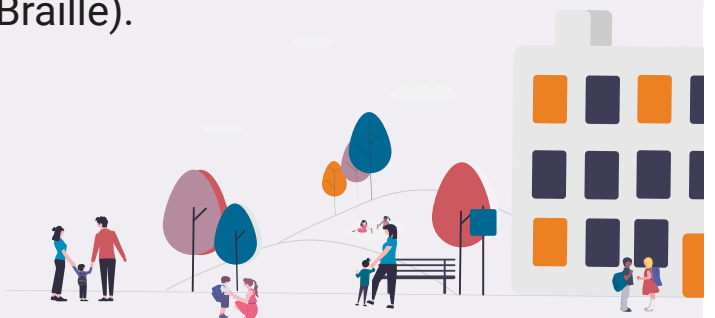
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