



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY 23 March 2021

No	Item	Summary of Key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	<i>Note</i>
2.	Declarations of Interest	<i>Alderman Baird</i>
3.	Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 23 February 202	<i>Confirm</i>
4	Performance Improvement Update	<i>Note</i>
5.	Procurement Policy	<i>Adopt new Procurement Policy</i>
6.	Prompt Payment Statistics	<i>Note</i>
7.	Scheme of Allowances	<i>Note</i>
8.	Review of Funding Model for District Registration Offices	<i>Note</i>
9.	Conferences	<i>Nil</i>

10.	Correspondence	
10.1	National Association of Councillors, 2 nd March 2021	<i>Recommend payment of the Annual Membership for the period 2021/22 of £3,200.</i>
10.2	Office of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, 2 nd March 2021 - Local Government Boundaries Review	<i>Recommend Council avail of the virtual information session on the Local Government Boundaries review</i>
11.	Consultations	<i>Nil</i>
12.	Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel	<i>Nil</i>
13.	<p>Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Beattie, seconded by Councillor Schenning, referred from 2nd March 2021 Council Meeting</p> <p><i>Student Support - The covid – 19 pandemic has affected all citizens and that the impact on our young people has been severe. This Council recognises the difficulties faced by those young people in full – time third level education, both at universities and further education colleges, who, because of restrictions, are unable to attend classes in person or live in student accommodation which they have paid for. This Council recognises that many university students have found themselves suffering financial hardship which has caused significant distress and led to poor mental health. This Council calls on university accommodation providers and private landlords who have not provided rent waivers to do immediately and</i></p>	<i>Support Notice of Motion</i>

	<i>calls on the Department for the Economy and Department of Finance to develop and fund a Student Support Grant for all full time third level students, many of whom cannot gain any employment at this time and are unable to claim benefits.</i>	
	In Committee (Items 14-16 inclusive)	
14.	Debt Management	<i>Recommend that Council approve the write-off as set out above</i>
15.	Minutes of Land and Property Sub-Committee Meeting held Wednesday 3 March 2021	<i>Approve Minutes</i>
16.	Redundancy Payment	<i>Recommend that Council approves the related redundancy payments</i>
17.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (o))	
	(i) That Council consults with Residents & Key groups within the Portstewart area to ascertain the needs of the community going forward” (Alderman Fielding)	<i>Referred to Leisure and Development Committee for consideration</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 MARCH AT 7.00 PM**

In the Chair: Alderman Hillis (C)

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

Members in Attendance: Councillor Holmes (R), Councillor Schenning (R)

Officers Present: M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
P Donaghy, Democratic & Central Services Manager (R)
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer (R)
A Ruddy, Audit, Risk and Governance Officer (R)
W McCullough, Head of Sport and Well-Being (R)
J McCarron, Performance Manager (R)
F Hegarty, Human Resources Officer (R)
I Owens, Committee and Member Services Officer (C)

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

Press (3 No.) (R) Public (0 No.)

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

The Chair read the remote meetings protocol at the beginning of the meeting:

Welcome to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting.

I extend a welcome to members of the press and public in attendance. You will be required to leave the meeting when Council goes into committee. You will be readmitted by Democratic Services Officers as soon as the meeting comes out of committee. I would also remind you that the taking of

photographs of proceedings or the recording of proceedings for others to see or hear is prohibited.

If you are having technical difficulties try dialling in to the meeting on the telephone numbers stated on the chat and then Insert the Conference ID code.

If you continue to have difficulties please contact the number provided on the chat at the beginning of the meeting for Democratic Services staff and ICT staff depending on your query:

The meeting will pause to try to reconnect you.

Once you are connected

- *Mute your microphone when not speaking.*
- *Use the chat facility to indicate to that you wish to speak. The chat should not be used to propose or second.*
- *Please also use the chat to indicate when you are leaving the meeting if you are leaving before the meeting ends.*
- *Unmute your microphone and turn your camera on when you are invited to speak.*
- *Only speak when invited to do so.*
- *Members are reminded that you must be heard and where possible be seen to all others in attendance to be considered present and voting or your vote cannot be counted.*

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

The Chair confirmed that in line with the 'national day of reflection' and the bereavement suffered through the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it was fitting to mark the event by taking a recess at 8 pm to 'shine a light' as it is hoped for brighter days ahead.

The Chair further confirmed that he would take Agenda Item 13, Notice of Motion, as Item 4 to facilitate a non-committee member who had seconded the proposer to be present.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Duddy

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were recorded for:-

Alderman Baird in Item 7.1 – Land and Property Sub-Committee Meeting minutes 3 March 2021, Item 7.1 Ref 85/20 – Rathlin Island, Foreshore – Rural Housing Association.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2021

The Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR BEATTIE, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR SCHENNING, REFERRED FROM 2ND MARCH 2021 COUNCIL MEETING

Student Support - The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all citizens and that the impact on our young people has been severe. This Council recognises the difficulties faced by those young people in full – time third level education, both at universities and further education colleges, who, because of restrictions, are unable to attend classes in person or live in student accommodation which they have paid for. This Council recognises that many university students have found themselves suffering financial hardship which has caused significant distress and led to poor mental health. This Council calls on university accommodation providers and private landlords who have not provided rent waivers to do immediately and calls on the Department for the Economy and Department of Finance to develop and fund a Student Support Grant for all full time third level students, many of whom cannot gain any employment at this time and are unable to claim benefits.

The Chair invited the Proposer, Councillor Beattie, to speak in support of the Notice of Motion. Councillor Beattie read the following (amended) NOM statement:-

“The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all citizens and the impact on our young people has been severe. This council recognises the difficulties faced by those young people in full time third level education, both at universities and further education colleges, who, because of restrictions, are unable to attend classes in person or live in student accommodation which they have paid for. This council recognises that many university students have found themselves suffering financial hardship which has caused significant distress and led to poor mental health.

This council calls on university accommodation providers and private landlords who have not provided rent waivers to do so immediately.

This council welcomes the Covid-19 Disruption Payment announced by the Department for Economy but regrets the exclusion of students from Northern Ireland studying in the Mainland or the Republic of Ireland, who have faced the same high costs and lack of financial support. This council calls on the Minister to amend this scheme, making it fair and inclusive to all students.'

Members, I bring this motion tonight conscious of the fact that we have a university here on our doorstep in Coleraine, a number of further education colleges and student housing in the surrounding towns.

Covid-19 has impacted all citizens, but students and young people have been particularly badly impacted. The Executive has put into place support packages for businesses and companies, but so far has failed to provide adequate support for students.

While we warmly welcome Minister Dodds' adoption of the SDLP proposal to give a £500 one off payment to every full time student in Northern Ireland, it is disappointing that those who study on the mainland or the Republic of Ireland have been excluded.

Covid-19 has seen an increase in people needing to claim benefits, many for the first time. However, for our students this is not an option as full time students cannot claim benefits. Students often rely on part time work, as I myself did, to help with the cost of getting a third level qualification. This is quite often in the hospitality sector, in bars, cafes and restaurants. However, this has not been possible during sustained periods of lockdown.

I'm sure members here, like myself, have been contacted by students and their parents in utter despair at the situation they find themselves in. Students are typically having to continue to pay rent for accommodation both private and halls of residence. In Belfast, some of our young people are paying up to £500 per month.

Some students have had to endure being locked into their student accommodation for extended periods of enforced isolation or quarantine. Indeed, students have had very little value for money from the high cost of their tuition fees, accommodation costs and general living costs over the last year.

Members, these financial pressures are doing nothing to help our young people in a time when mental health issues are so prevalent among this cohort. I think it's important to recognise that many of these young people, whether they are studying in Northern Ireland, the mainland or the Republic of

Ireland are OUR young people, people who have grown up in our borough and whose parents have been and continue to be our ratepayers. Members, whilst our MLAs are continuing to fight for our student population I feel it is important that our voices as elected representatives are heard too. We have a duty to speak on behalf of our citizens.”

The Chair invited the Seconder, Councillor Schenning, to speak in support of the Notice of Motion. Councillor Schenning said that she wholeheartedly supported the motion and had witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of the pandemic on students and their families with many struggling to pay fees and accommodation costs whilst remaining at home.

Councillor McGurk also spoke in support of the Motion and said that Sinn Fein continued to lobby the department for further help for students, suggesting that further enhancements and schemes needed to be made available to ensure adequate support to students.

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

5. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by The Performance Manager.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Council's current Performance Improvement related workstreams and priorities, as well as setting out the Performance Reporting cycle to Council for 2021.

APSE National Benchmarking Indicators 2019/20

By 30th January 2021, Council had successfully submitted their data returns to the APSE facilitated National Benchmarking Network. This involved the collation, analysis and submission of data relating to over 100 Performance Indicators across 13 separate Council Service areas.

During the months of February and March 2021, officers from each of the 13 Service areas are virtually attending the National Benchmarking working groups. During these sessions, officers from across the Northern Irish Councils meet to review the Performance Indicators and work together to resolve any issues or anomalies that have arisen in the previous year.
2.3 In April 2021, Council will receive Performance Benchmarking reports relating to the outcomes of the 2019/20 APSE Performance Indicators.

Development of Performance Improvement Plan 2021/22

In 2020/21, DfC removed the requirement for Councils to publish an Improvement Plan in the context of the national response to the Covid-19

pandemic. For 2021/22 Councils are directed to agree and publish a Performance Improvement Plan.

Council is currently working on the development of Performance Improvement Objectives for the year 2021/22 along the following themes:

- Public consultation and engagement
- Council staff absenteeism
- The impact of the Growth Deal
- Improvements to Council's Performance and Business Planning processes
- Long Term Finance
- Recovery

Over the coming months, officers will be engaging with Members and citizens in order to refine and agree Improvement Objectives for 2021/22, ahead of Council being asked to approve a final Plan in June 2021.

Directorate Business Planning and Council's "Perform" Software

Historically, both internal Audit and NIAO audit recommendations have highlighted the Council's Business Plans as an area for improvement. One of the most significant issues was that Business Plans were not being submitted to, and agreed by, Council until late into the relevant business year.

Senior officers have been working hard to address this issue and as such are on course to deliver Directorate and Service level Business Plans to their relevant Committees in April 2021. Furthermore, the directorates have committed to a midyear analysis report against their Business Plans to their relevant Committees, no later than December of the business year. This will provide more openness, transparency and indeed opportunities for Members to scrutinise Council performance within the business year.

As soon as Business Plans are agreed, this enables officers to populate our Perform software with targets and indicators, to enable the creation of a more consistent and standardised set of performance reports.

Performance Reporting cycle to Council in 2021

Please see the table below (previously circulated) which sets out the planned cycle for reporting to Council with regards to all Performance Improvement and Business Plan related work:

Conclusions

Members are asked to review the information provided in this paper (previously circulated) and to seek any further clarity required.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report.

6. PROCUREMENT POLICY

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

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has to establish a framework of governance under which its services and functions can operate.

Requirement for Procurement Policy

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council requires a wide range of goods, services and capital works to meet the organisation's goals and objectives while ultimately delivering the services and facilities expected by the ratepayer. The sourcing of items within any of these categories by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council can be classed as "public procurement". Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy – Procurement Policy Principles defines public procurement as "the process of the acquisition, usually by means of a contractual arrangement after public competition, of goods, services and works and other supplies by the public service".

Procurement Policy

To ensure that such goods, services and capital works are sourced in the most cost effective manner possible and deliver best value for money for Council and the ratepayer, it is essential to utilise good procurement practice at all times which strikes an appropriate balance between sourcing goods, services and capital works of the required quality in a timely fashion, while also ensuring compliance with procurement legislation. The current policy was adopted in March 2019 and requires updating in order to reflect a council decision taken on 11 September 2019 which lowered the spending limit requiring Council approval to £10,000. The updated policy, previously circulated, includes that amendment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council adopt the new Procurement Policy as tabled.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor McLean

- to recommend that the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council adopt the new Procurement Policy as tabled.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote
14 Members voted For; 1 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

7. PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS

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

Background

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

Detail

These figures are published on a quarterly basis by DFC with Councils required to do likewise. The purpose of the statistics is to encourage Councils to support businesses especially those local and/or small businesses for whom cash flow is of vital importance to their continued survival. In addition as part of Council's performance improvement plan for this year the payment of our suppliers has been identified as one of the performance improvement objectives with a target of 90% of suppliers being paid within 30 calendar days. The tables below detail Council's performance since April 2017 the latest data being for quarter 4 of 20/21 year being up to and including end of February 2021. After the dip in month 10 due to the Christmas holiday period figures are encouraging once more in period 11 with 64.71% of invoices being paid within 10 working days and 85.99% of invoices being paid within 30 calendar days, there is a number of factors impacting on this as follows. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Council are currently processing a significantly lower number of invoices. Many staff are working from home, we have introduced where possible email approval for those invoices that don't require a purchase order, which has improved turnaround times. The Accounts Payable team have changed some of their working practices and staff have been allocated specific suppliers to look after and therefore when supplier invoices are out for approval for more than 10 days the staff member responsible is chasing the budget holder to approve these.

Improvement Actions

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

Alderman Baird queried the number of disputed invoices and sought clarity on the circumstances which led to a disputed invoice. The Chief Finance Officer said that number of disputed invoices was quite low and that the main reasons included businesses invoicing prematurely, pricing queries and invoices for goods which were faulty and required replacement or a credit note.

At the request of Councillor Knight-McQuillan, the Chief Finance Officer agreed to provide additional information by way of a percentage showing those invoices where defined as disputed.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report.

8. SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

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

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has established a scheme of allowances payable to Members for the current period. The scheme provides for the payment of allowances to Councillors on the basis that:

- 1 – The maximum level of basic allowance as determined by the Department for Communities (DfC) is paid
- 2 – The maximum level of carers allowances as determined by the DfC are paid
- 3 – The maximum level of mileage rates as determined by the DfC are paid
- 4 – Councillors' payments are made on the third last banking day of each month

Detail

The updated scheme of allowances, a copy of which has been included with this report, takes into account a number of factors:

- 1 – Basic allowance – budget allows for 2% increase, 2.75% increase to be applied but not yet notified
- 2 – Mileage rates
- 3 – Rates for dependant carer's allowance
- 4 – Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

The four items are in keeping with the normal periodic update of the scheme.

Amendments

Circular LG 07/2021 (attached as an appendix) from DfC dated 8 March 2021 set out the revised rates of basic responsibility allowance and Carer's Allowance, as our scheme which has already received Council approval, is predicated on the inclusion of the maximum rates allowable under departmental guidance this report is for information only to inform members that the scheme has been updated to include the updated rates.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report.

9. REVIEW OF FUNDING MODEL FOR DISTRICT REGISTRATION OFFICES

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on the Review of Funding Model for District Registration Services. The main finding is that the General Registry Office does not propose to reduce the existing allocation of resource at present but will keep this under review.

Background to Review of Funding Model for District Registration Service

In October 2019 Council was informed of The General Register Office (GRO) plans to carry out a review of the funding model in relation to the provision of the registration service. The last review was completed in 2015 and a number of changes have been introduced since then including a new computer system, the Northern Ireland Registration Office System (NIROS), the ability of humanists to conduct civil marriages and the introduction of same sex marriage and opposite sex civil partnerships.

The Department of Finance Business Consultancy Service (BCS) was engaged to conduct the review and Council was provided with the Terms of Reference which were presented to Council in October 2019.

The review has now been completed and GRO has shared a summary of the findings in correspondence from the Assistant Registrar General to Chief Executives dated 18th February 2021 in order to agree the level of staffing required to deliver the function of the registration service on behalf of the Registrar General.

Update

The Assistant Registrar General's correspondence advises that the purpose of the independent review was to ensure that the model was fit for purpose and that the appropriate number of staff are available to Council to enable it to deliver the service in the district.

The terms of reference for the review were:

Terms of Reference (TOR)

“To review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current funding model for DROs and design an optimal funding model.”

Specifically, the review will address the following:

- *Review the workload of each DRO in light of its funding allocation to establish the extent of excess/insufficient capacity in the current system and inform future funding decisions.*
- *Review and verify timings and formulae for each of the working processes/activities used to inform funding decisions.*
- *Verify the appropriateness of funded activities e.g. specific registration tasks, non-registration and core Council activities.*
- *Review working practices and procedures in light of prescribed practices and procedures, and identify any areas for improvement.*
- *Review existing reporting arrangements (e.g. frequency, content etc.) and identify optimal reporting arrangements.*
- *Make recommendations in relation to the optimal future funding model for DROs.*

The Assistant Registrar General provided the main findings, recommendations and information covering the current and updated funding model activities, the rationale for the funding model updates and the updated process maps.

The consultants have updated the activity figures (average over 2017- 2019) into the model. For Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council this shows that for the district the estimated whole time equivalent (WTE) resource required to provide the registration service is 3.62. As these are estimates we are accepting that the true requirement may lie within +/- 10% of these figures. The exercise shows that the WTE for Causeway Coast and Glens district falls outside the tolerance however GRO does not propose to reduce the existing allocation of 4.28 at present but will keep this under review. No adjustments have been made to the funding model to take account of the current Covid-19 situation as this is viewed as an extraordinary year which would not demonstrate true reflection of the Registrar’s work. GRO have and are continuing to provide additional funding to enable Councils to cover the costs of additional staff, equipment, training and overtime that may be required at this time.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council notes the content of the report in relation to the update on the Review of Funding for District Registration Offices.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report.

10. CONFERENCES

There were no conferences.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

Purpose of Report

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

The following correspondence has been received:

11.1 National Association of Councillors, 2nd March 2021

Correspondence has been received from the National Association of Councillors advising the 'Annual membership', for the National Association of Councillors, NI region, is due for renewal.

The subscription fee for 2021/2022 is £3,200, which has remained unchanged since 2015.

Council has previously resolved to contribute for the period 2020/21 £3,200.

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the request from National Association of Councillors to pay the Annual Membership for the period 2021/22 of £3,200.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan

Seconded by Councillor McLean

- to recommend that Council pay the Annual Membership for the period 2021/22 of £3,200.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote

14 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained

The chair declared the Motion Carried.

11.2 Office of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, 2nd March 2021 - Local Government Boundaries Review

Following previous correspondence to Council on the Review of Local Government Boundaries in NI that is currently underway, the Office of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner are offering Council the opportunity to participate in a virtual information session.

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the offer of a virtual information session on the Local Government Boundaries review, at a date and time to be arranged.

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Councillor Knight McQuillan

-to recommend that Council avail of the virtual information session on the Local Government Boundaries review, at a date and time to be arranged.

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

12. CONSULTATIONS

There were no consultations.

13. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Alderman S McKillop

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

Members of the Press / Public left the meeting at 7.50 pm

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

14. DEBT MANAGEMENT

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

Purpose of Report

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

Background

Council implemented a revised Debt Management Policy in February 2017.

Detail – Aged Debt Analysis

Previously provided was a summary:

As at 28th February 2021;

As at 29th February 2020;

Movement and comparison between last year and this year (29th February 2020 and 28 Feb 2021)

Table, previously circulated, detailed the status of any debt which was over 90 days in excess of £10 at the previous report but which has now been cleared.

Table, previously circulated, detailed the status of any debt which was over 90 days in excess of £10 currently (excluding BID accounts).

Options

Debt Write-off under £1,000 - In accordance with debt management policy the Chief Finance Officer reported that there were no such debts this month for reporting.

Debt Write-off over £1,000 - In accordance with debt management policy the Chief Finance Officer reported that there was one such debt this month for reporting for a company which no longer exists and which would not be worth pursuing.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the write-off as set out above.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan

Seconded by Alderman S McKillop

- to recommend that Council approve the write-off as set out above.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote

15 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained

The chair declared the Motion Carried.

The meeting took a recess at 7.55 pm
The meeting resumed at 8.10 pm

The Chair thanked members for taking the time to partake in the 'national day of reflection'.

**15. MINUTES OF LAND AND PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021**

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

Alderman Baird questioned the requirement for considering all of the business for the Land and Property Sub-Committee 'in committee'. The Democratic and Central Services Manager confirmed that elements of some items could be discussed 'in public' but often the discussion can require the meeting to go into 'committee' during debate when exempt matters come up. She further advised that the issue would be kept under review. The Chair of the Land and Property Sub-Committee, Councillor Knight-McQuillan, said that is difficult sometimes in the midst of a matter to move in and out 'of committee'

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

AGREED to recommend that the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee held on 3 March 2021 and recommendations therein are approved

16. REDUNDANCY PAYMENT

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by The Head of Sport and Well-Being.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information relating to staff who are currently At Risk of Redundancy within the Council and, in the event that no suitable alternative employment is found and accepted by such staff, to seek approval for payment of the related statutory and Council-agreed redundancy payments [as outlined within the Report]

Background

There are a range of funded projects operating within the, some of which have required staffing resource in order to deliver on KPI's and funding requirements. Staff occupying these posts have either been transferred or redeployed from

within Council to take up posts in funded projects or have applied to vacancies advertised for funded positions within Council.

Some of these staff have had their employment extended over consecutive years either because of extensions to project funding or by being transferred at the end of one funded project/position to other funded projects/positions within Council through the 'At Risk of Redundancy' redeployment process.

The Council's redundancy and redeployment process provides for the statutory requirement to consult with and seek suitable alternative employment for staff who are potentially at risk of redundancy. In the event that no suitable alternative employment is found, then termination of contract by means of redundancy is invoked including the statutory obligation to provide related redundancy payments [as appropriate].

HR staff work closely with each of the Directorates, managers and affected staff to explain the At Risk of Redundancy process, consult with employees and their Trade Union representatives and [where possible] to identify any available suitable alternative employment for staff affected by the ending or withdrawal of project funding.

A number of funded projects are due to end within the Leisure and Development Directorate by 31st March 2021 and, as a result, some staff have been identified as being At Risk of Redundancy. The information at Section 3.0 (previously circulated) identifies 'At Risk' staff and outlines the redundancy costs associated with same.

At Risk of Redundancy Information: Leisure and Development Directorate

The Leisure and Development directorate has nine employees on fixed term (funded) contracts which are due to expire shortly (see expiry dates below). To date, of the nine "At Risk of Redundancy" employees, two have been matched to suitable alternative employment (the Peace IV Finance and Verification Officer and RDP Officer.

However, seven employees, (2 x RDP and 5 EBA Coaches) remain At Risk of Redundancy and, as of 12/03/2021, no suitable alternative employment has been found for these employees.

The contract for two of these employees in Rural Development Programme expires on 31st March 2021 and there are no suitable alternative employment options available to them. Therefore, these two employees are at risk of redundancy at 31st March 2021. The Redundancy Costs associated with these two employees is £67,697, which relates to a combined 28 years' service.

The contracts for five Everybody Active Coaches (EBA) also expire on 31st March 2021 and, as of 12-03-21, no suitable alternative employment options are available. The potential Redundancy Costs for these five employees is £38,034+, which relates to a combined 31+ years' service.

Total Potential Cost £105,731 (+ 2 EBA costs awaiting confirmation)

Having consulted with affected staff and Trade Unions and carried out a search of vacant posts within Council, it is not anticipated at this stage that suitable alternative employment will be found for the RDP Program Manager or the RDP Lead Finance and Verification Officer. Therefore approval is sought to proceed with these redundancies and related redundancy payments.

The five EBA Coaches have been advised of potentially suitable vacant posts across Council and [once the post-Covid19 staffing and service requirements are confirmed for Sport and Wellbeing] there may be suitable alternative posts for EBA Coaches to consider.

Therefore, communication is ongoing with EBA coaches, with the option of being Furloughed for approximately 6 weeks, post 31st March, to avoid a Redundancy situation. It is anticipated that, at the end of the 6-week period, the situation may be resolved, or Furlough may be extended for a further period, pending the COVID 19 staffing and service requirements.

However, as their funded posts are due to expire 31st March 2021, and some of the available posts may not be deemed suitable for EBA staff, approval is also sought to proceed with these redundancies and related redundancy payments in the event that no suitable alternative employment is secured either by their termination date of 31st March 2021, or at the end of the Furlough period.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council considers the information presented within the report and, in line with both statutory requirements and Council agreed procedures, approves the related redundancy payments for those staff on the basis that such payments will only be made in the event that no suitable alternative employment is secured for affected staff either by their termination date of 31st March 2021, or at the end of the Furlough period.

Councillor C McShane thanked the Head of Sport and Well-Being and her team for the work of the Everybody Active scheme which she felt was a life-line during the pandemic both physically and mentally, in the absence of leisure facilities being opened.

Councillor C McShane further commented that she believed that Brexit had adversely affected employment with 2 posts now redundant.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan

Seconded by Councillor McCaw

- to recommend that Council approves the related redundancy payments for those staff on the basis that such payments will only be made in the event that no suitable alternative employment is secured for affected staff either by their termination date of 31st March 2021, or at the end of the Furlough period.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote.

15 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained

The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

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

In accordance with Standing Orders, Alderman Fielding submitted the following Item:-

- 17(i)** “That Council consults with Residents & Key groups within the Portstewart area to ascertain the needs of the community going forward’.

The Chair, Alderman Hillis, advised that with the agreement of Alderman Fielding this item would be referred to the Leisure and Development Committee for consideration.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan

Seconded by Councillor McCaw and

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move ‘*In Public*’.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.30 pm

Chair