

**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 24 AUGUST 2021**

| No | Item | Summary of Key Recommendations |
|-----------|---|--|
| 1. | Apologies | <i>Alderman Fielding and S McKillop and Councillor McGurk</i> |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | <i>Alderman Knight McQuillan and Finlay</i> |
| 3. | Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 22 June 2021 | <i>Confirmed</i> |
| 4. | Performance Section Business Plan Update | <i>Noted</i> |
| 5. | Section 75 Annual Progress Report to Equality Commission for NI | <i>Noted</i> |
| 6. | Community Plan Update including Summary Performance Reports Quarter 1 April – June 2021 | <i>Noted</i> |
| 7. | NIPSO Complaints Consultation | <i>To recommend that Council submits the response to the NIPSO Complaints Handling consultation as detailed in the consultation questionnaire</i> |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | | |
| 8. | Prompt Payment Statistics | <i>Noted</i> |
| | | |
| 9. | Conferences | <i>Noted</i> |
| | | |
| 10. | Correspondence | <i>Nil</i> |
| | | |
| 11. | Consultations | <i>Noted</i> |
| | | |
| 12. | Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel | <i>Nil</i> |
| | | |
| | <i>'In Committee' (Items 13 - 15 inclusive)</i> | |
| | | |
| 13. | Debt Management | <i>To recommend that Council note the contents of this report and that Council approve the write off of the debt as detailed above and that the Chief Finance Officer makes the appropriate entries in Council's accounts.</i> |
| | | |
| 14 | Land and Property Sub Committee Minutes 4 August 2021 | <i>To recommend that the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee held on 4 August 2021 and recommendations therein are approved.</i> |
| | | |
| 15 | Agency Workers and Vacancy Control ¹ | <i>To recommend that a report be brought to September</i> |

¹ Amended by Council 7th September 2021
CP&R 210824 IO

| | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| | | <i>Policy and Resources Committee outlining options in reference to drawing up contracts with agency staff regarding a job being offered after a period of</i> |
| | | |
| 16. | Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12(o)) | |
| | | |
| 16.1 | Council resolved 'that the population of the Organisational Structure is completed within 6 months with no additional resources' on Tuesday 1 st December 2020. This was unanimously agreed by all those in attendance at the meeting, yet this has been completed. I am requesting a full explanation as to why nothing has been brought forward to committee to discuss? ² | <i>To recommend to Council that monthly report be provided to the Director of Corporate Services from the Directors of Leisure and Development and Environmental Services detailing progress on populating of the organizational</i> |
| | | |
| 16.2 | Council employ through Agency a large number of persons. Some of those individuals have been employed by council through agency for numerous years. What efforts if any have been made by HR and the various Directorates to bring those individuals onto Councils full-time employment? | <i>Withdrawn</i> |
| | | |
| 16.3 | Covid-19 has had an impact on our staff like many other organisations. Has HR adopted a new sickness policy in relation to those who have unfortunately suffered from Covid-19 and now have been diagnosed with 'long Covid'? If so when, and has this change in Councils Sickness Policy been adopted by Council? ³ | <i>Noted</i> |

² Amended by Council 7th September 2021

³ Amended by Council 7th September 2021

**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 24 AUGUST AT 7.00 PM**

- In the Chair:** Councillor Knight McQuillan (C)
Alderman Hillis, Vice Chair (Item 15) (C)
- Present:** Alderman Finlay (C), Duddy (C); McKeown (R)
Councillors: Beattie (R); Chivers (R); Dallat O’Driscoll (R);
McCaw (R); McLean (C); C McShane (R); Wilson (C);
McGlinchey (R)
- Officers Present:** M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
M Smyth, Director of Finance (Interim) (R)
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer (R)
S McMaw, Head of Performance (R)
J McCarron, Performance Improvement Manager (R)
J Richardson, Head of Capital Works, Energy and
Infrastructure (R)
K Mailey, HR Business Partner, Organisation
Development (R)
I Owens, Committee and Member Services Officer (C)
- In Attendance:** A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer
(C) Chrissy Thompson, ICT Officer (C)

Press (2 No.) (R)

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

Substitutions: Alderman McKeown substituted for Alderman Baird

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

The Chair read the remote meetings protocol at the beginning of the meeting:
*Welcome to the Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on
Tuesday 24th August 2021.*

All those in attendance should be aware that the meeting will be audio recorded.

This includes when the meeting is in committee. The public session of the audio recording will be published on Council's website within 2 days of the meeting.

Elected Members are reminded that they are personally responsible for any comments that they make at the meeting.

Members of the press and public will be required to leave when the meeting goes into committee.

If anyone loses connection please call the number which was sent to you by Democratic Services. The number can be found in the email with the meeting link sent yesterday 23rd August 2021.

Members please use the chat facility if you wish to speak. For those in the Chamber, please wait until your microphone is switched on before speaking.

I would also remind all in attendance that the taking of photographs of proceedings or the recording of proceedings, other than by authorised officers, is prohibited.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman S McKillop and Fielding and Councillor McGurk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Alderman Knight McQuillan declared an interest in Item 15 Agency Workers and Vacancy Control. Alderman Knight-McQuillan vacated the Chair at this point and did not participate in the Item.

Alderman Finlay declared an interest in Item 15 Agency Workers and Vacancy Control. Alderman Finlay did not participate in the Item.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2021

Summary, previously circulated.

The Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held Tuesday 22 June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. PERFORMANCE SECTION BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

The report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Performance and the Performance Improvement Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to Provide Elected Members with an update on progress in relation to the Performance Section Business Plan.

Background

The 2021/2022 Performance Section Business Plan was agreed by Council in February 2021. The plan includes a number of service areas namely the Statutory Performance Improvement Duty, Performance Management, Corporate Insurance Services, Corporate Health and Safety and Well-Being, Civic Buildings and Estates Strategy.

The progress update is set out within Appendix 1 (previously circulated). There are other Appendices attached to provide Elected Members with some additional detail.

The Head of Performance informed members that a detailed report would be brought to the September Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee meeting which would include Quarter 1 dashboard, self assessments and performance against targets including statutory and APSE.

The Performance Improvement Manager provided an update as follows:-

- Timeframes met for Performance Improvement Plan Implementation for 21/22
On course to do annual self assessment in September.
- Met and complied with direction from DfC and Audit Office.
- Performance processes including performance software in preparation for 21/22 reporting year
- Met data submission deadlines to APSE
- Citizens survey on target.

The Head of Performance provided an update as follows:-

- Ongoing risk assessments; training; on site visits with additional Covid risk assessments being carried out by two specialised staff
- Employee handbook annual update and review complete
- Driver handbook annual update and review in progress
- Steps taken to ensure staff working from have the correct equipment
- New Display Screen Equipment risk assessment currently being rolled out
- Accident investigations ongoing and tied closely with insurance
- Plans for staff to return to work safely in conjunction with completion of a well being survey is expected.
- Driver audit scheme in place to protect staff and public and to assist should incidents occur
- Cost of software for the processing of accidents has been reduced from £16,000 to £5,000.
- Provision of free flu jabs will continue this year for staff and councillors
- Cancer bus seen a full complement of staff for screening which was welcomed.

- Insurance summary provided which included current claims and a breakdown of the types of insurance in place and associated cost which has risen by nearly 40% since Brexit.
- Lands portfolio will be mapped and plotted using GIS
- Civic buildings and estates strategy being developed and currently considering disposal of assets in line with the agile working policy which allows Council to reduce footprint and cost.
- Directors have been asked to provide details of staff working from home on a flexible basis and those at work which will help determine the estates strategy.
- A workshop is planned for November and four tours for elected members who may not be familiar with accommodation in some of the civic buildings. Prior to the workshop elected members will be provided with an overview.
- Pricing policies in relation to civic buildings and town halls also to be reviewed.
- Centenary Window contractor will produce sample layout and design for elected members consideration after which adaptations can be undertaken.
- Mayor has agreed to host a reception for The Honourable The Irish to mark the transfer of Coleraine Town Hall to Council

Alderman Finlay expressed concern around the cost of insurance to Council. The Head of Performance explained the process of setting reserves aside in advance of cases being settled and the claims process itself.

AGREED to recommend that Council note the report.

5. SECTION 75 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NI

For information report, previously circulated, was presented by The Director of Corporate Services.

Introduction

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (and included as a commitment in the Council's Equality Scheme) is a requirement that the Council provide an annual report to the Equality Commission for NI on progress in meeting our obligations under the equality and good relations duties.

The report also requires the Council to report on how it is fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by reporting on progress made on the commitments included in the Council's Disability Action Plan

Annual Progress Report 2020/21

A copy of the Annual Progress Report for 2010/2 was previously circulated.

The format of the report is based on a template provided by the Equality Commission and the report always covers the previous financial year. The period of time this report deals with therefore is from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Part A of the report relates to the Section 75 Equality and Good Relations duties and covers outcomes, impacts and good practice in relation to these areas of work, along with progress on the Council's Equality Action Plan, consultations undertaken, screening and Equality Impact Assessments undertaken, monitoring arrangements, training and complaints made in relation to equality and good relations issues.

Part B outlines actions achieved, partially achieved or not achieved in relation to the Council's Disability Action Plan.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the report.

6. COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE INCLUDING SUMMARY PERFORMANCE REPORTS QUARTER 1 APRIL – JUNE 2021

For information report, previously circulated, was presented by The Director of Corporate Services.

Introduction

The Community Plan is a long-term plan (from 2017 to 2030) based on sound, robust evidence with a focus on improving social, economic and environmental well-being and contributing to sustainable development.

The Community Plan is a strategic planning tool for the Causeway Coast and Glens area and it is the key over-arching framework for partnerships and initiatives in the Council area. It is not seen as an additional or parallel process to structures already in place.

Phase 1 of the community planning process was the development of a Strategic Framework for the Community Plan. This document was finalised in April 2017 and officially launched in June 2017. It outlines the high-level outcomes identified for the Causeway Coast and Glens area based on an extensive public consultation process and a statistical analysis of the area.

Phase 2 of the community planning process was the development of a comprehensive Delivery Plan in 2018 which put in place 44 practical actions and activities to achieve the outcomes identified in the Strategic Framework.

Phase 3 of the community planning process put in place mechanisms to monitor and report on performance against the Community Plan objectives/outcomes.

An Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) process is utilised to monitor and report on performance with Action Leads using report cards to provide information on the following areas in relation to each of the actions within the

Delivery Plan:

- What did we say we would do?
- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Who is better off?

The legislation also requires that the Community Planning Partnership reports to the public by way of a published statement, highlighting progress on outcomes achieved and actions taken. This Statement of Progress has to be published once every two years with the first of these required within two years of the Community Plan.

Causeway Community Planning Partnership published its first Statement of Progress in November 2019. The second Statement of Progress will be published in November 2021.

The Community Planning Partnership undertook a review of its Delivery Plan in 2020 and this revised Delivery Plan was approved in December 2020. The Delivery Plan now includes 34 actions.

Interim Review of Community Plan

Section 69(1) of the Local Government (NI) Act NI 2014 requires a review of the Community Plan to be completed before the fourth anniversary of the date

on which the Community Plan was published. For Causeway Coast and Glens this meant a review of the Community Plan was due by June 2021.

However, the Department for Communities recognised the disruption to normal working arrangements caused by current events and they advised the Partnership that they considered it would be sufficient to meet the legislative requirements for Partnerships to formally confirm that a review of the Community Plan has been conducted with a commitment to a further review before April 2022.

The Partnership agreed that a survey would be compiled and sent out to Partnership Members and action leads and this survey would seek views on the three key Population Outcomes in the Community Plan along with the associated 12 Intermediate Outcomes. It would also look for any additional views or comments on the Plan.

All statutory partners responded to the survey as did most of the action leads and, following consideration of the comments submitted, the Partnership deemed itself satisfied that the current Community Plan was fit for purpose and agreed a full review would take place in 2022.

The Partnership noted that climate change and the impact of Covid-19 had been highlighted as issues that needed to be addressed and it was noted that aspects of these issues were already being addressed via the revised Delivery Plan.

Progress on Delivery Plan

Quarterly Summary of Progress Report (copy previously circulated)

The monitoring and reporting process used by the Partnership requires quarterly reports to be submitted by Action Leads and these are then reported on by the four thematic leads to the next Partnership meeting. A summary report is circulated to all Partnership members on progress in relation to the 34 actions contained in the Delivery Plan and a copy of this summary report for July 2021 is attached for your information.

Further information on two specific actions from the Delivery Plan are included below.

Key Local Transport Concerns (Delivery Plan Action 20)

The Partnership noted that the action relating to transport issues in the Causeway Coast and Glens area had been completed with the Working Group submitting a research report to the Partnership. This Working Group was comprised of representatives from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Council, Translink, North Coast Community Transport, Northern Area Community Network, Department of Education and the Health and Social

Care Board. It was chaired by a representative from the Department for Infrastructure.

A presentation on the Working Group report was given by the representative from the Department for Infrastructure at the July meeting of the Partnership where members noted that the key findings of the report were:

- Problems with connectivity and access, particularly affecting children, older people and people with a disability.
- Lack of transport affected people's access to work, social interaction, isolation and access to healthcare.
- Lack of co-ordination meant solutions to these issues were not being achieved.

Discussions will now take place on how to progress the findings of this research report and develop an approach to take this action forward. Proposals will be brought back to the Partnership in due course. Anti-Poverty Interventions (Delivery Plan Action 4)

A Stakeholder Steering Group has been set up to progress this action in relation to anti-poverty interventions. This Steering Group is led by the Council and meets bi-monthly. Five Community Planning Partners are involved in the Steering Group along with representatives from the community and voluntary sector.

An Action Plan has been developed by the Steering Group to steer collaborative work in the area of anti-poverty initiatives over the next 18 months and the objectives of this Action Plan include:

- Increased co-ordination between organisations, working with individuals and families in most need.
- Support for those on low incomes/financial crisis to maximise income and minimise costs.
- Improve capacity for those that most need support.
- Promote better signposting of information and communication. - To work in partnership to tackle the causes of poverty. This work is on-going and the Partnership noted that feedback from foodbanks had reported a rise again in requests for support.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the report.

7. NIPSO COMPLAINTS CONSULTATION

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

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present a draft response to the NIPSO consultation on Complaints Handling. The deadline for responses has been extended to 30th September 2021.

Further details and the consultation documents can be found at <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/publications/complaints-handling-consultation/>

NIPSO is consulting on two documents:

A draft Statement of Principles (SOP) and
A draft Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP).

Draft Response to Consultation Document

The consultation documents were circulated internally for officers' consideration and comments. The consultation was also listed on the consultation schedule presented for Members' consideration at Corporate Policy & Resources Committee on 22nd June 2021 and Council on 3rd August 2021.

The draft response is attached at Appendix A (previously circulated) for Members' consideration as the Council's response to the consultation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council submits the response to the NIPSO Complaints Handling consultation as detailed in the consultation questionnaire presented.

Proposed by Alderman Hillis
Seconded by Alderman Finlay and

AGREED: to recommend that Council submits the response to the NIPSO Complaints Handling consultation as detailed in the consultation questionnaire presented.

8. 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 2018 the latest data being for quarter 2 of 21/22 year being up to and including end of July 2021. This is a significant improvement on prior years with 70.99% of invoices being paid within 10 working days and 93.43% of invoices being paid within 30 calendar days for the now complete first quarter. The quarter 2 figures, which encompass July, have shown a slight reduction however this expected at this time of year due to many staff being on leave. There is now a sustained improvement in these figures which is to be welcomed and is due undoubtedly to the efforts of all staff who process invoices and receive goods but in particular to the Accounts Payable team who have, in very trying circumstances, performed extremely well during the last couple of years.

Improvement Actions

Whilst the improvements above are most welcome Council cannot afford to rest on its laurels. There is still room for improvement as other Councils have performance that is higher than Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council therefore we must now strive to firstly maintain this level of performance and with the implementation of a new finance system seek to identify efficiencies in our processes especially where the new technology can offer electronic solutions to manual tasks.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the report.

9. CONFERENCES

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

Purpose of report

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

The following was listed:

Local Government Annual Conference 2021: A Better Northern Ireland Councils Make it Happen (booking form enclosed)

Save The Date: Wednesday 24 November 2021 Clondeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor & Online

NILGA are offering six physical delegate places and unlimited virtual delegated places.

Cost of a Physical Delegate - £99 (+Vat) (Per Person)

Cost of a Virtual Delegate - £35 (+Vat) (Per Person)

Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate Policy & Resources Committee consider the Conference listed.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the report.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to note.

11. CONSULTATIONS

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Corporate Services, and highlighted the submission date of 30th September 2021.

Housing Executive Correspondence - 'Reaching Rural' Draft Rural Strategy 2021-2025 - has been developed following pre-consultation and discussion with stakeholders and reflects the particular housing challenges which can face our rural tenants and customers and the growing demand and changing policy context for the development of new rural homes.

The draft report considers how we can maintain the momentum achieved over the last Rural Strategy in channeling investment and support into our rural communities and identifies the range of issues which must be addressed through local engagement, investment and collaborative working over the next four years. These issues include but are not limited to:

The existing shortage of homes which are affordable and accessible;
Hidden housing need in rural villages and small settlements;

The often reduced access to basic services, facilities, advice and support; and
A higher occurrence of less energy efficient homes and fuel poverty.

The areas of work borne out of the Housing Executive's wide range of functions, presents many opportunities for us to help address these issues and to achieve our overarching vision for rural communities:

'Towards vibrant, shared, healthy and sustainable rural communities where everyone has access to decent and affordable housing'

The draft Rural Strategy sets out three high level outcomes, twelve priorities and 29 proposed actions under the three cross cutting themes of:

1. Supporting rural customers;
2. Enabling the provision of affordable rural homes; and
3. Securing the future of our rural communities.

AGREED – to recommend that Council note the Consultation document.

12. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters to report the Partnership Panel.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

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

- * **Members of the Press / Public left the meeting at 8:40 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**

The Chair read the following statement:

Members, I would remind you that this session is being audio recorded in line with Council's guidance. You are reminded that there should be no other persons present who are not entitled to be - either hearing or seeing consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings. Failure to comply could be in breach of Code of Conduct responsibilities. You are reminded that you are personally responsible for any comments that you make

13. DEBT MANAGEMENT

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

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

Options

Debt write-off under £1,000

In accordance with our debt management policy the Chief Finance Officer is required to report to Council any debts under £1,000 which the Chief Finance Officer has the authority to write-off. There were two such debts this month.

Debt Write-off over £1,000

In accordance with Council's debt management policy, Council approval is sought in order to write off any debts in excess of £1,000. There were no such debts this month.

WHIT06 – Caravan park customer who left the site mid-season in 2020. Taken to small claims for debt of £2,020.11. Debtor disputed charges, claiming Covid closures prevented use of facilities. Tourism Manager agreed to settle out of court for £1,000. Therefore recommend £1,020.11 + £130 court fees to be written off.

The Chief Finance Officer provided clarity in response to Member's queries regarding information detailed within the report presented.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

AGREED - to recommend that Council note the contents of this report and that Council approve the write off of the debt as detailed above and that the Chief Finance Officer makes the appropriate entries in Council's accounts.

14. LAND AND PROPERTY SUB – COMMITTEE MINUTES 4 AUGUST 2021

Confidential Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held on 4 August 2021 were presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee held on 4 August 2021 and recommendations therein are approved.

- * **Councillor Knight McQuillan, having declared an interest, left the meeting at 7:55 pm and vacated the Chair.**

Vice Chair, Alderman Hillis, assumed the Chair for the Item.

15. AGENCY WORKERS AND VACANCY CONTROL

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

The report presented, included the purpose of report, the background, Legal advice on the legalities of Agency Workers being offered a permanent post after a certain period of time, and an update on the process of Filling posts in the new structures.

The Director of Corporate Services gave a verbal update on the position of agency workers and vacancy control as follows.

The Director explained that in November 2016, followed by ratification at the Council meeting in December agency workers were added at Stage 4 which was a new step and was different up until that stage to what we had been doing previously. The report included details of legal advice sought by Council on legalities of agency workers being offered a post after a certain period of time and within report is agency workers legislation and advice.

The filling of posts is being progressed through the new structure, working with trade unions and 2 working groups, Leisure and Development - Sport and Well Being and Environmental Services – Operation and Estates.

Groups include engagement, communication and consultation in order to get to a place where people in posts are assimilated across ie permanent members of staff and then result in vacancies filled.

Once permanent staff have been assimilated and following the outcome of that process agency staff are eligible to apply for posts before Council goes external.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the HR Business Partner and herself would answer questions from elected members.⁴

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

Officers responded to Members queries, in relation to Council's Policies, Procedures and Processes.

Councillor Wilson said that the uncertainty faced by agency staff some of whom have been working for Council for years was unsatisfactory and felt that Council had a moral obligation to these individuals. Alderman Duddy referred to the outstanding work undertaken by some of Council's agency staff and the fact that they did not benefit from holiday or sick pay or be able to avail of a pension.

⁴ Amended by Council 7th September 2021
CP&R 210824 IO

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

Recommended that a report be brought to September Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee outlining options in reference to drawing up contracts with agency staff regarding a job being offered after a period of time.

The Chair put the proposal to the Committee to Vote
10 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 members Abstained
The Chair declared the Motion Carried

* **Chair Councillor Knight McQuillan assumed the Chair at 8:20pm and Vice Chair, Alderman Hillis vacated the Chair.**

16. Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12(o))

16.1 Council resolved 'that the population of the Organisational Structure is completed within 6 months with no additional resources' on Tuesday 1st December 2020. This was unanimously agreed by all those in attendance at the meeting, yet this has been completed. I am requesting a full explanation as to why nothing has been brought forward to committee to discuss?

The Director explained that a great deal of work had been carried out to date including bi-lateral meetings with Regional and Local Trade Union representatives. The Director of Corporate Services referred to the complexities and challenges involved, however assured elected members that officers were working hard to progress, and seek agreement with the Trade Unions on the Management proposals.

The Director of Corporate Services provided a comprehensive verbal update to elected members on the current position on Organisational Structure and progress on harmonisation as follows.

The Leisure and Development Working Group meet every 3 weeks. During and post Covid the group considered terms and conditions going forward as there was less footfall at Leisure Centre. Job specifications for this Directorate have been agreed and evaluated.

The Environmental Services Working Group meets fortnightly and incorporate at Operations and Estates. To date 16 job specifications have been completed which incorporates 90% of staff.⁵

⁵ Amended by Council 7th September 2021
CP&R 210824 IO

Both groups include 3 regional reps from major trade unions including NIPSA, GMB and Unite and 2 local reps from each of the trade unions as well as Directors and Heads of Service. The process began with collating information and looking at 'as is' position and services going forward, service required how many we need to deliver and harmonisation terms condition at the same time.

Alongside bi-lateral negotiations with local trade unions consultations are ongoing with employees around agreeing and developing job descriptions.

Some anomalies identified in pay audit which was undertook for all 227 employees need actioned and also benchmarking took place with other Councils in Northern Ireland ie best practice and what is included in job descriptions. Data will then be modelled with proposed grades going forward.

Affordability has to be built into final proposals with trade unions which will be presented to unions in September for signing off after which the unions will ballot members and subject to council approval with will take place simultaneously and following agreement with trade unions and Council HR will support Director in progressing to have staff simulated into posts in winter. In Spring time it is anticipated to fill vacant posts subject to there being no challenges from staff. The Director of Corporate Services reminded elected members that challenges historically slow down these processes.

Following assimilation of permanent staff vacant posts will be firstly filled by agency staff in line with our policy and procedures. The Director gave a breakdown of the vacant posts in Estates, Operations and Sport and Well-Being.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

AGREED to recommend to Council that a monthly report be provided to the Director of Corporate Services from the Directors of Leisure and Development and Environmental Services detailing progress on populating of the organizational structure.

16.2 Council employ through Agency a large number of persons. Some of those individuals have been employed by council through agency for numerous years. What efforts if any have been made by HR and the various Directorates to bring those individuals onto Councils full-time employment?

Alderman Duddy advised that he wished to withdraw his request for this to be considered due to the discussion which already took place at Item 15.

16.3 Covid-19 has had an impact on our staff like many other organisations. Has HR adopted a new sickness policy in relation to those who have unfortunately suffered from Covid-19 and now have been diagnosed with 'long Covid'? If so when, and has this change in Councils Sickness Policy been adopted by Council?

The Director of Corporate Services advised that Council are applying the regional guidance from the NJC for local government services, and advised that an employee who self-certifies, or produces a sick note, for any COVID related sickness absence (including an adverse reaction to a vaccination) receives pay and leave in accordance with their length of service so that the usual provisions of the sickness scheme apply, therefore no triggers and it doesn't affect sick pay. For absences regarding 'long COVID', Council are complying with our own Sickness Absence Policy, therefore no need for amendment. The NJC guidance states that should sickness absence continue, employers should adopt the same practice as they would for any other long-term illness. All absences will be taken into consideration at absence review stages. Decisions made based on the circumstances of each case. Occupational Health consulted throughout and Council complying with regional guidance

The HR Business Partner explained that absence as a result of Covid including self-isolating would not count as sickness as it was considered an infectious disease.

In terms of long Covid, in the interests of equality the sickness policy remained unchanged with a comparison made to a staff member being absent from work due to cancer or other long terms illnesses.⁶

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Hillis 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 9:10 pm

Chair

