



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ROUND CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON TUESDAY
5 MARCH 2024 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Alderman L Clarke
- Members Present
(In person)** : Councillors – S Cosgrove, N Kelly, H Magill, A O’Lone,
M Stewart and B Webb
- Members Present:
(Remote)** : Aldermen – L Boyle and P Bradley
Councillors – H Cushinan, S Flanagan, E McLaughlin and
L O’Hagan
- Officers Present** : Chief Executive – R Baker
Director of Finance & Governance – S Cole
Director of Corporate Strategy – H Hall
Deputy Director of Governance – L Johnston
Deputy Director of Finance – J Balmer
Head of Finance – R Murray
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal – P Casey
ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson
Member Services Officer – S Boyd

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the March Meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee, and reminded all present of recording requirements.

1. APOLOGIES

Alderman P Michael
Councillor M Brady

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 G/BCEP/5 DAERA EPIZOOTIC DISEASE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

1. Purpose

This report requested approval for the renewal of a continuing partnership arrangement with DAERA during an emergency involving an Epizootic Disease outbreak, and the subsequent signing of an updated Memorandum of Understanding (circulated).

2. Introduction/Background

The DAERA Epizootic Disease Protocol is a Memorandum of Understanding between DAERA and local Councils. The MOU came into effect on 13 July 2017. The aim of the document was to enable Councils to provide support to DAERA if an emergency was declared as the result of an epizootic disease outbreak (e.g. Foot and Mouth, Avian Influenza, Swine Fever, Rabies etc.).

3. Previous Decisions of Council

The Memorandum of Understanding was originally agreed by Council in March 2019.

4. Key Issues/Points

Working in conjunction with the Operational Heads of Service, available resource estimates i.e. staff, vehicles etc to be reviewed and documented. Subject to availability at the time, Councils may agree to provide DAERA with personnel, plant and equipment to provide key services to help manage the outbreak/incident.

5. Financial Position/Implications

DAERA would reimburse Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council for the associated costs of:

- (a) staff redeployed to carry out the Service;

- (b) ancillary costs in redeploying those staff;
- (c) any other service provision associated costs, for example, plant/equipment loaned by the District Council or the provision of kennelling facilities; and
- (d) any other incidental expenses.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

Members approve the ongoing partnership arrangement with DAERA and the signing of the updated Memorandum of Understanding.

ACTION BY: Elaine Girvan, Head of Health, Safety and Resilience

3.2 CE/CS/032 DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present to Members for consideration and approval the:

- **Organisation Development Directorate Business Plan 2024-25**
- **Finance and Governance Directorate Business Plan 2024-25**

2. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) put in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

Specifically, the duties in the Act relate to Section 84(1), 85(2) and 85(9) whereby the Council has a statutory duty to make arrangements to:

- Secure continuous improvement;
- Secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- Exercise its functions so that any Departmental specified standards are met.

It was proposed to adopt a formal approach and methodology to business planning which would support and be an integral part of the Council's performance management and delivery arrangements.

Business Plans for Organisation Development and Finance and Governance 2024-25 were circulated for Members' approval.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council approved a strategic performance management framework as part of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan (draft for consultation) 2024-25 in January 2024.

4. Purpose

The purpose of the Directorate Business Plans were to:

- Demonstrate how each of the Directorates were supporting and achieving Council's priorities.
- Provide a clear sense of purpose of the Directorate and the challenges it faced.
- Illustrate how it was aligning its resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Measure performance and hold ourselves to account to ensure we delivered for the Council and its residents.

5. Format

The proposed format was robust and followed best practice, bringing together all the key aspects of the Directorate into one place to provide transparency and consistency. It provided alignment with the Corporate Plan; Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan; Financial Plan; Resourcing and Risk Register.

The format included:

- Introduction and Background to Directorate
- Directorate Structure
- Directorate Risk Register
- Achievements in 2023-2024
- Alignment with draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030
- Directorate Business Plan 2024-25
- Financial Position 2024-25
- Progress Report (bi-annual report)

6. Governance/Reporting Arrangements

It was proposed that a bi-annual report was presented to Committee (September 2024 and April 2025) on progress and achievement of the business plans.

7. Financial Position/Implication

As agreed as part of the Council's rate setting process.

8. Summary

In summary the proposed approach and methodology to Business Planning would provide a more streamlined and integrated method of tracking and analysing performance and providing enhanced visibility.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed that

- a) **the Organisation Development Directorate Business Plan 2024-25; and**
- b) **the Finance and Governance Directorates Business Plan 2024-25 be approved.**

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 HR/HR/019 AGENCY WORKERS UPDATE

1. Purpose

This report provided a monthly update on the engagement of agency workers across the Council for January 2024.

2. Introduction/Background

Agency workers were engaged to provide temporary cover for absence such as:

- Maternity leave
- Secondments
- Sickness absence
- Vacant posts
- Seasonal events

3. Key Points

The engagement of agency workers was subject to a rigorous approval process and required the approval of the Corporate Leadership Team. There was budgetary provision for the majority of posts filled through departmental salary budgets, salary contingency and grant funding.

4. Current Agency Workers

The utilisation of agency workers in January 2024 compared to January 2023 was circulated (Appendix 1). This excluded limited ad-hoc agency cover which was necessary to provide operational cover at short notice.

In reviewing the number of agency workers, it was noted that there was a significant decrease in the number of agency workers in January 2024 compared to January 2023.

5. Cost implications (Capital Expenditure/Revenue)

Agency Expenditure

The expenditure on agency workers in January 2024 was circulated (Appendix 2). The cost had slightly increased to 7% (of all staff costs) for the period from

April 2023 to January 2024 compared to April 2022 to January 2023, which was 6%.

The increased costs had been impacted by:

- The NJC pay increase for the 2023 financial year which was also applicable to all Agency Staff
- The local pay award of the second spinal column point increase which was applied on 1 April 2023, following the Local Pay Agreement in January 2023.

6. Summary

Recruitment exercises were ongoing to fill a number of vacant positions, which would further reduce reliance on agency workers. There were 3 vacancies within Capital Development covered by agency workers anticipated to be filled permanently within the next 2 months.

We were committed to reducing our dependency on agency workers and would continue to recruit directly for vacant positions. However, we may still require agency workers for ad-hoc, seasonal or temporary assignments.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.2 **HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE UPDATE APRIL 2023 – JANUARY 2024**

1. Purpose

This report provided an update on the management of attendance for the period April 2023 to January 2024 (summary circulated).

2. Introduction/Background

Absence at the end of January was above target by 1.21 days with 11.44 average days lost per employee against a target of 10.23 days. Covid absence was not included in the reported figure as a significant number of these cases work from home during the isolation period.

3. Key Points

There continued to be a positive return to work of short term cases along with 10 long term cases ending in January 2024, 2 of which left the Council's employment.

Further analysis of Absence Figures for January 2024 indicated the following:

4. 100% attendance

In January, 60% of our workforce achieved this against a target of 60%.

If employees with 100% attendance were excluded from the average day's calculation, the actual absence incurred by those employees with absence episodes would be:

Period	% of workforce with absence	Long term average days	Short term average days	Overall average days
January 2024	40% ↑	22.82 ↓	4.85 ↑	27.67 ↓
Same period last year 2022/23	37%	30.39	4.27	34.66

The above figures showed a reduction in the average length of long term absence when compared to the same period last year. This demonstrated our active commitment to reducing days lost to long term sickness absence.

5. Formal Case Reviews from April 2023 to date

Formal Case reviews (FCRs) were normally held where all possible steps had been taken and had failed to secure the employee's return to work within a maximum of 9 months.

Cases Concluded	11 , with employees at Formal Case review stage either returned to work, obtained ill health retirement or left the organisation.
Cases In Progress	2
Cases Approaching	1

6. Long Term Absence – 82% of the overall absence figures

Long term absence is defined as continuous absence greater than 20 days. There had been a reduction in the percentage of absence falling under the long term category when compared to the previous month, with 10 long term absence cases ending, 2 of which left the Council's employment and it was expected that the number of cases attributing to long term sickness absence would decrease in the coming year. This was due to continued efforts to address complex long term absence cases, conducting regular wellbeing meetings with employees, utilising Occupational Health services, promotion of the Staywell App, and holding timely absence review meetings.

- **% of Challenging long term cases – 75%**, this included absence related to road traffic accidents, surgery, disability related illness and general injuries.
- **Returned to work – 8 cases** had successfully returned to work with a further **2** leaving Council's employment.

7. Short Term Absence – 18% of the overall absence figures

Short term absence is defined as absence less than 20 working days. Whilst it was understood that short term absences are inevitable, it was crucial for Managers/Supervisors, Human Resources and employees to work together to minimise the impact of these absences on service delivery.

- Main Reasons:
- Cold/flu, stomach bug, infection (accounting for 57% of short term absence)
- Stress Depression, Mental Health
- Chest and respiratory issues

8. Overall Absence

Stress-related absence (including work related stress) accounted for 41% of total absence. Proactive work was ongoing to address this by:

- Encouraging open communication to address stress and mental health concerns in wellbeing meetings.
- Providing mental health awareness training for employees.
- Providing access to mental health support services, through Inspire Counselling service, the Council's Occupational Health service, Northern Recovery College and additional information available through STAYWELL.
- Implementing flexible working arrangements, supporting phased returns and reasonable adjustments where possible in the workplace.
- Encouraging physical activity through the promotion of the Council's employee subsidised Gym Membership Scheme.
- Encouraging participation in our wellness programme with regular wellbeing activities and health advice promoted weekly through the STAY MORE CONNECTED kudoboard.
- HSENI Managing Work Related Stress Training "A Line Manager's Approach" was held in the Autumn 2023, with 45 line managers across departments attending out of 74 invited.
- Partnering with legal advisors and Employers for Disability NI to arrange awareness sessions on mental health illnesses, to provide training to managers on managing stress and how to encourage open communication to reduce stress-related absence and to promote a healthy work environment.
- To focus on raising awareness of mental health, line managers attended two online sessions led by Inspire on "Managers Promoting Positive Mental Health" during January and February 2024.

- Inspire delivered an online session on “Mental Health Awareness” for staff in January 2024 with a further session held in February 2024.
9. To improve absence rates and encourage earlier returns to work, the following actions are being undertaken.
- The consultation for the alignment of Terms & Conditions of employment commenced in September 2023 and this includes the proposal of one single policy for managing attendance. Subject to the successful outcome of a workplace ballot, it is anticipated that the agreement of a single policy will support staff, line management and HR in the management of absence cases.
 - Case management discussions are held with legal advisors to support a targeted approach for complex cases. These help Directors, Heads of Services, and HR to review cases, consider reasonable adjustments, and understand the legal context, enabling specific action plans for individual cases.
 - Meetings held with directorates with high or complex absence cases have been increased to analyse cases and agree on next steps, with attendance from relevant Directors, Deputy Directors, and Heads of Service. Formal case reviews were scheduled as needed.
 - The HR Business Partnership team was working closely with managers and Occupational Health on an individual case management basis. This ensures prompt action is taken to keep absences within target and provided support to managers in absence review trigger meetings for fair and consistent approach.
 - Monthly case management discussion meetings were scheduled as needed to review complex cases with an Occupational Health consultant. Case managers attended these sessions to ensure effective use of the Occupational Health service and support earlier returned to work where possible.
 - The Corporate and Human Resources Risk registers had been reviewed to reflect the current absence rate position, with actions and interventions recorded to mitigate risks.
 - Managers within Parks and Planning have received training on effectively managing absence caseloads. A number of toolkits had been identified and shared on STAYWELL to further assist managers and employees.
 - Targeted training was being scheduled in areas of high absence provided by Human Resources, legal advisors, and in partnership with employers for disability or other relevant organisations.
 - Development continued on an online training module to promote the importance of attending work. This will be rolled out to new staff initially

and then across the wider organisation.

- Annual flu jab clinics were held in October and November 2023 with 88 employees receiving the vaccine.
- The use of the Wellbeing Calendar was promoted to continue to support employee wellbeing.
- Our Employee Engagement Working Group recommenced in November 2023 with participation being cross departmental and cross generational.
- Physiotherapy services are being provided for appropriate cases of back and musculoskeletal-related absence.
- HR reviewed absence paperwork, including the absence notification and return to work forms.
- A Managing Attendance Action Plan was being developed by the Human Resources Department.

A Member requested that future managing attendance update reports included only month to month actions.

Following questions from Members, regarding teambuilding events and benchmarking against other Councils and organisations of a similar size, the Director of Corporate Strategy advised that a report on good practice on managing attendance would be brought back to a future meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Webb

Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.3 CCS/CS/006 CUSTOMER CHANNELS REPORT

1. Purpose

This report updated Members on achievements to date in relation to performance indicators for the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 customer services objective.

2. Introduction/Background

The Plan sets out the performance improvement target; 'we will achieve high levels of customer satisfaction'. Four indicators were set as measures of success in 2023/24.

3. Customer Satisfaction

We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services:

A total of 953 responses had been received in 2023-24, and satisfaction for the year so far was 91.8% and was on track against the target of 80%.

2021-22	2022-23	Target 2023-24	2023-24 (April 2023 to January 2024)	Status
87.5%	92.9%	80%	91.8%	On Track Exceeding to date

4. Abandoned Calls

The percentage of abandoned calls would be 6.5% (or less):

A total of 148,993 calls were presented from 1 April to 31 January 2023-24, and the percentage of abandoned calls during 2023-24 to date was 5.3%.

2021-22	2022-23	Target 2023-24	2023-24 (April 2023 to January 2024)	Status
6.0%	5.1%	6.5%	5.3%	On Track Exceeding to date

5. Online Transactions

We have achieved at least 650,000 online transactions:

Officers continued to promote and monitor the shift of transactions to an online basis, where practical and beneficial. Results were reported on a quarterly basis.

2021-22	2022-23	Target 2023-24	2023-24 (April 2023 to December 2023)	Status
652,593	874,10	650,000	508,920	On Track Exceeding to date

6. ANBorough app

There were at least 8,000 downloads of the Residents App:

Total downloads for 1 April to 31 December 2023 were 10,812 which was 135.15% of target. Figures for January and February will be reported in April.

2021-22	2022-23	Target 2023-24	2023-24 (April 2023 to December 2023)	Status
14,481	13,963	8,000	10,812	Achieved

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

Members note the achievements to date in relation to performance indicators for the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 customer services objective.

NO ACTION

4.4 PT/CI/049 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/24 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 3

1. Purpose

This report was to recommend to Members that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Report Quarter 3 be noted.

2. Background

Members were reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 was approved in June 2023. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with six identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets.

3. Previous Decision of Council

As agreed at the August Council meeting, quarterly performance reports would be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group.

4. Key Points

Third Quarter performance progress reports for Finance and Governance (appendix 1) and Organisation Development (appendix 2), and the overall Council Corporate Performance and Improvement 2023/24 (appendix 3) were circulated for Members information.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

the Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Report Quarter 3 be noted.

NO ACTION

4.5 CCS/EDP/7 QUARTERLY SCREENING REPORT AND RURAL SCREENING

1. Purpose

This report updated Members on the quarterly Section 75 and Rural Screenings which took place within the period of October 2023 and January 2024.

2. Background

Members were advised that in line with the Council's Equality Scheme it had been agreed to provide quarterly updates on the screening of policies under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the Council gave a commitment to apply

screening methodology to all new and revised policies. Where necessary and appropriate, these new policies would be subject to further equality impact assessment.

3. Section 75 and Rural Screenings

The policies noted below had been screened between October 2023 – January 2024.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Armed Forces Day 2024	1
Draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25	1

- (1) Screened with no mitigation
- (2) Screened with mitigation
- (3) Screened and EQIA required

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
 Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the quarterly screening report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.6 **G/MSMO/27 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP MINUTES**

1. Purpose

This report informed Members that a meeting of the Member Development Working Group took place on Monday 12 February 2024.

A copy of the minutes of the meeting was circulated for information.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
 Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the minutes of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on Monday 12 February 2024 be noted.

NO ACTION

4.7 **G/BCEP/5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGIONAL RESILIENCE – REVISED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

1. Purpose

This report provided Members with information for noting on the continuing Partnership Arrangement and revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Regional Resilience team and all Councils.

2. Introduction/Background

Due to an increased frequency of emergencies, the Northern Ireland Executive agreed, in 2014, to put in place enhanced civil contingency arrangements at a sub-regional and regional level. A new structure of five Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) was put in place, with Councils playing an important role in supporting and facilitating the administrative function of the EPGs.

In 2016, on advice from the PSNI, it was agreed that a reduction in the number of EPGs to three would allow for greater efficiency. This model came into effect in January 2018, and required a Local Government resourcing model to provide adequate programme management of these areas of work, and to enhance and enable an effective response to emergencies.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) was last updated and agreed by Council in June 2019, with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council undertaking the lead Council role on behalf of the 11 Councils at that time.

4. Key Issues/Points

The Regional Resilience team work collectively on behalf of Local Government with respect to civil contingencies but independently of each Council. The Team are involved in the preparation, response and recovery phases of civil contingencies where sub-regional, regional or national co-ordination is required. The Team does not make decisions for Local Government but develops and maintains collaborative working arrangements with multi-agency partners, facilitates co-ordination of preparation, response and recovery, and promotes cohesive planning, mutual support arrangements and the development of a consistent approach to emergency planning arrangements across Local Government.

The service legal agreement (circulated) had been revised updating Regional Team structures, roles and governance arrangements reporting through the Executive Steering Group, and the agreement had been signed by all Northern Ireland Councils.

5. Financial Implication

There were no current cost implications for Council as the Department for Communities (DfC) had agreed to fund the function. However, should DfC funding be withdrawn, 6 months' notice would be provided to Councils. Any additional costs incurred, associated with a cessation of funding for Regional Resilience, would be shared equally between all parties and made payable to the Lead Council, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the report be noted on the continuing partnership arrangement and revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Regional Resilience team and all Councils.

NO ACTION

4.8 G/DPFI/2 QUARTERLY REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

1. Purpose

This report was to provide Members with a summary of Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) requests received by Council during Quarter three of the year.

2. Introduction/Background

A report had been prepared on requests received in the third quarter of the year (1 October to 31 December 2023) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) which was circulated.

3. Key Points

A summary of the quarter's statistics was as follows:

- The number of requests received was significantly higher than the number in the same period the previous year – an increase of 30%.
- Of the 92 requests received, 75 were under FOI, 12 under EIR and 5 under DPA.
- 77 requests were completed within the quarter.
- 97% of the requests were completed within the legislative deadlines of 20 days for FOI and EIR requests and a calendar month for requests made under DPA.
- The sections that received the most requests in the quarter were, Finance (27), Planning (17), Environmental Health (12) and Human Resources (11).
- Six appeals were received during the quarter. In three of these appeals the Council provided further information/clarification.
- One complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) was notified within the quarter. Once the complaint had been allocated to a Case Officer, the ICO would proceed to a decision notice or contact the Council directly if they required further information. No further correspondence had been received to date.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.9 CCS/EDP/023 DEAF FRIENDLY COUNCIL – BRITISH DEAF ASSOCIATION SIGN LANGUAGE WEEK 2024

1. Purpose

This report was to recommend to Members activities planned for Sign Language Week 2024 and to advise Members of a successful funding application.

1. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded of Councils commitment to become a Deaf Friendly Council through our signing of the BSL & ISL Deaf Charter. In support of the Charter and our deaf community, a series of events and awareness raising activities were planned as part of Sign Language Week 2024 which would run from Monday 18 March to Saturday 24 March 2024. These activities had been budgeted within the Accessibility and Inclusion budget.

2. Summary of Events & Awareness Raising Activities

Below is a summary of the events and awareness raising activities which had been planned:

- Mayoral Signed Video
- Awareness Raising Social Media Posts
- Fun day Event with Action Deaf Youth
- Deaf Friendly Signed Tours
- BSL and ISL Deaf Charter Certificate presented to Jordanstown Special School

3. Financial Position/Implication

Members are advised that the Council has been informed of a successful funding application. £9150 has been awarded from the DfC Sign Language Partnership Group (SLPG) to deliver BSL Level One Sign Language Training for Elected Members, employees and residents. An update will follow on the arrangements for the delivery of this training, when the letter of offer for funding had been received.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Magill
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed

that the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease.

5 ITEM IN CONFIDENCE

5.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** CD/GEN/005 CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRESS REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2024

1. Purpose

This report updated Members on the entirety of the Capital Programme and progress of specific Capital Projects.

2. Phases of Capital Project Management

The report was presented under the following sections or stages:

- Stage 0 - Preliminary work to establish the justification for the Capital Investment or Strategic Outline Case to identify preferred way forward.
- Stage 1 – The completion of an Outline Business Case to evidence the viability, sustainability, scope / scale and affordability of the project. At Stage 1, a preferred option emerges and design costs to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team are approved.
- Stage 2 – With a focus upon the preferred option, detailed design to allow the CAPEX and whole life Revenue costs to be estimated. Note that during this stage, all costs are 'Pre-tender Estimates'. The completion of the Full Business Case allows Planning Approval to be sought and a procurement exercise for a contractor or supplier to be completed. The completion of Phase 2 provided:
 - A Full Business Case.
 - Detailed Design.
 - Planning approval.
 - A tender report for the supplier or contractor.
 - A report to Council to make the Investment Decision to proceed to approve / appoint winning tenderer, sign contract and manage construction.

The Council approval at the conclusion of this stage is the Investment Decision, allowing the appointment of the winning tenderer, contract management and construction.

- Stage 3 - Construction Contract Management normally via NEC 4 contract.
- Stage 4 – Benefit Realisation. Approve handover of asset into service and manage operations.

A Council decision was required to progress a project through each and every stage.

The aforementioned stages were presented in reverse order i.e. starting with

those projects which have been completed year to date.

3. Stage 4 – Benefit Realisation. Projects Completed Year to Date

The table below lists the projects completed in the 10 months to 31st January 2024. The value of these schemes total £12.1m and would be capitalised as part of Council's investment in the Borough in the relevant financial year.

Project	Expenditure b/fwd £	23/24 Spend £	Total Spend £
Crematorium	████████	████████	████████
Crumlin Allotments	████████	████████	████████
Car Park Refurb - Portglenone Road, Randalstown	████████	-	████████
Glengormley Shopfront Scheme	████████	████	████████
Ballyclare Cemetery – Path Resurfacing	████████	-	████████
Ulster Bar Corner	████████	████████	████████
Hazelbank Park – Phase 1 – Coronation Garden	████████	████████	████████
Antrim Forum- Gym refurbishment and essential mechanical and electrical upgrades – Phase 1	████████	████████	████████
Manifestations Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monkstown Comm Assoc • Whiteabbey Comm Assoc • Crumlin United FC 	████████	████████	████████
Glenwell Road - RH turning lane	████████	████████	████████
Rathenraw CC – roof replacement	-	████████	████████
Riverfront Regeneration Scheme	████████	████████	████████
Total	8,402,397	3,779,803	12,182,200

4. Stage 3 - Contract Management - Projects Currently Under Construction

Table 2 below lists all projects that were currently 'on-site' or where a contractor appointment had been made, following the Council's Investment Decision.

The value of schemes currently under construction total £15.98m in value.

Project	Project Budget £	External Funding £	Estimated Cost to Council £	Expected Completion
Antrim Forum- Gym refurbishment and essential mechanical and electrical upgrades – Phase 2	██████████	-	██████████	Mar-24
Development of Office / Workspace, Antrim	██████████	██████████	██████████	Apr-24
Manifestations Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lockkeepers Cottage • Monkstown Comm Forum - fencing 	██████████	██████████	██████████	Mar -24
Antrim Forum Stadium Track Refurbishment	██████████	-	██████████	June-24
Sixmile Leisure Centre footbridge, Ballyclare	██████████	██████████	██████████	Mar-24
3G Training pitch - Monkstown	██████████	-	██████████	June-24
Glengormley Office Block	██████████	██████████	██████████	Nov-25
Total	15,980,392	5,034,249	10,946,143	

5. Stage 2 - Projects Currently at Final Business Case, Planning & Procurement

Table 3 below listed the projects that were at the 'Final Business Case stage. The completion of the Full Business Case allowed Planning Approval to be sought and a procurement exercise for a contractor or supplier to be completed.

The Council approval at the conclusion of this stage was the Investment Decision, allowing the appointment of the winning tenderer, thereafter contract management and construction.

The value of schemes currently at this stage totalled £21.3m.

Project	Project Budget £	External Funding £	Est Cost to Council £	Expected On-Site	Expected Completion
Glengormley Environmental Improvement Scheme	██████████	██████████	██████████	Jan-25	Oct-26
Illumination Schemes (8no.)	██████████	-	██████████	tbc	tbc
Farmley Carpark/Glenwell Road, New Road Glengormley	██████████	██████████	██████████	Mar-24	Jun-24
Carmoney Cemetery - Columbarium and Welfare Facilities	██████████	-	██████████	tbc	tbc
Manifestations Projects • Randalstown Viaduct	██████████	██████████	██████████	Mar-24	May-24
3G Pitch Ballyclare, Cloughan Project	██████████	-	██████████	Mar-24	Apr-25
3G Pitch, The Diamond, Rathcoole and Community Hub Building	██████████	-	██████████	Sept-24	Dec-25
Mallusk Play Area	██████████	██████████	██████████	Apr-24	Sept-24
Village Settlements Scheme Templepatrick, Doagh & Burnside	██████████	██████████	-	Mar-24	Sept-24
Hazelbank Park – Phase 2 – Pavilion and Visitor Facilities	██████████	-	██████████	May-24	Aug-24
Jordanstown Loughshore Park Café extension	██████████	-	██████████	Sept-24	Aug-25
Antrim Courthouse Café Refurbishment	██████████	-	██████████	May-24	May-24
Mossley Mill Plant Room	██████████	-	██████████	July-24	Aug-24
AF 2G pitch – floodlight replacement	██████████	-	██████████	Jun-24	Aug-24
Cranfield Jetty	██████████	-	██████████	tbc	tbc
Mossley Pavilion and Pitches	██████████	-	██████████	Feb-25	Aug-25
Total	21,383,911	2,996,732	18,387,179		

6. Stage 1 – The completion of an Outline Business.

The completion of an Outline Business Case provides evidence for the viability, sustainability, scope / scale and affordability of the project. At the completion of Stage 1, a preferred option emerges.

Table 4 below lists projects where scoping and feasibility work has started on the project.

Project	Project Budget £	Expected On-site	Expected Completion	Notes
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	tbc	tbc	Awaiting scope / design
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Apr-24	Jun-24	Awaiting scope / design
[REDACTED]	tbc	tbc	tbc	HLF funding for feasibility development received
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	tbc	tbc	Concept drawings prepared
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	tbc	tbc	In consultation with NIHE. Business case to be developed
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	tbc	Mar-24	Awaiting design
[REDACTED]	tbc	tbc	tbc	Business case to be developed. Traffic survey complete

7. Stage 0 – Projects at the Earliest Stage of the Project Management Process

Preliminary work to establish the justification for the Capital Investment and associated operational responsibilities.

Project
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	

8. Review of the Capital Programme and Capital Project Management Processes

Members are to note that based upon the constraints of affordability and requirement for prioritisation, a review of the Capital Programme and Capital Project Management Processes has commenced for Members consideration.

A Member requested that an additional column be included detailing when a Capital Project had been added to the list.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
 Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the Capital update be approved.

ACTION BY: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

The Chairperson took the Supplementary report at this point of the meeting.

5.2 IN CONFIDENCE G/LEG/462/6 COUNCIL REMOTE/HYBRID MEETINGS

1. Purpose

This report provided Members with an update regarding the Communities Ministers decision in relation to the Regulations pertaining to the power of Councils to hold remote and hybrid meetings.

Specifically, with effect after 6 March 2024, the flexibility to hold Council/Committee meetings remotely, or by hybrid means, expires.

2. Introduction/Background

The circulated letter from the Department for Communities dated 1 March 2024 provided an update regarding Minister Lyons decision on this matter.

The Coronavirus emergency legislation provided Councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means. This included an enabling power

for the Department to make subordinate legislation regarding remote/hybrid meetings. The Order in relation to the ability of Councils to hold remote/hybrid meetings has been extended a number of times by the Department with the current extension to 24 March 2024.

The Order, unless extended (which to date it has been), expires 40 days from the date of being made. However, now that the Assembly has returned the 40-day approval period for the current extension Order is due to expire on 6 March 2024.

3. Key Issues

The Communities Minister, Minister Lyons, decided not to extend the Order under the Coronavirus legislation so therefore as of 6 March 2024 there is no legislation in place for Councils to be able to facilitate Members attending Council meetings remotely.

The Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 provided a power for the Department to make regulations for the purpose of or in connection with ensuring district councils meetings may be held remotely. The Minister had asked that the Department proceeded on regulations under the 2021 Act instead of the Coronavirus emergency legislation. The Department had not provided a timeline for the implementation of this new legislation.

The position regarding Members attendance at full Council and Committee meetings would revert to the position prior to the Coronavirus legislation. Therefore after 6 March Members must attend all full Council and Committee meetings in person until the new legislation is in place which would provide the option for Councils to hold remote/hybrid Council meetings.

4. Legal advice

The Borough Lawyer & Head of Legal Services provided the following legal advice in relation to what this meant for the Council after 6 March pending new legislation:

- In order for a Councillor to be deemed to be present, be able to vote and participate at full Council and Committee meetings they must be physically in attendance (Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014).
- Members could attend remotely at other meetings facilitated by the Council which did not involve decision making, for example, Group Leaders meetings, Working Group meetings, DEA meetings.
- Third parties making presentations/deputations at Council meetings could attend remotely.
- Council Officers could attend Council meetings remotely if necessary.

- Members of the public speaking in relation to quasi-judicial matters could attend remotely, for example, speakers at the Planning Committee and speakers in relation to Entertainment Licences.
- Any reference in Council Standing Orders and Council Protocols in relation to remote/hybrid meetings which refer to Members remote attendance at full Council and Committee meetings, save for the relevant sections which apply to those who can attend Council meetings remotely (examples: speakers, deputations), are set aside at the present time.

5. Conclusion

Officers would continue to liaise with Department Officials about the matter and report back to Members.

Members expressed disappointment at the Communities Ministers decision and requested that concerns were raised with both the Communities Minister and NILGA. A Member confirmed this matter was on the NILGAs Executive meeting Agenda which was being held on Friday 8 March.

Proposed by Councillor Webb

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

- a) **the report be noted;**
- b) **any reference in Council Standing Orders and Council Protocols in relation to remote/hybrid meetings which refer to Members remote attendance at Council meetings, save for the relevant sections which apply to those who can attend Council meetings remotely (examples: speakers, deputations), are set aside at the present time.**

Amended by Council 25 March 2024.

ACTION BY: Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer & Head of Legal Services

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin

Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 6.52 pm

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.